THE Hudson REVIEW

E. M. CIORAN:
The Ambiguities of Fame

JOSEPH WHITEHILL:
One Night for Several Samurai—a story

HANS J. MORGENTHAU:
The Writer's Duty and His Predicament

STEPHEN TAYLOR:
The Red Desert: Neurosis à la Mode

JACK MARSHALL:
Crosswinds—a long poem

Poems by WILLIAM DICKEY, LYSANDER KEMP, ALAN SILLITOE, RUTH FAINLIGHT.

Articles and Reviews by HOWARD GREEN, JOHN SIMON, B. H. HAGGIN, MARVIN MUDRICK, ROGER SALE, GERALD WEALES, BURTON RAFFEL, JOSEPH KERMAN, F. D. REEVE.

VOLUME XVIII, NUMBER 2 • SUMMER 1965 • $1.50 PER COPY

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A selection of new books from... **THE VIKING PRESS**

THE LAST ANALYSIS
A PLAY
by Saul Bellow

"It would be rank pedantry not to be grateful to Saul Bellow for the flood of antic imagination, mad rhetoric, and comic fantasy that he has poured into this improbable, yet serious farce."—HOWARD TAUBMAN, *N. Y. Times*. Largely rewritten since its Broadway production. $3.50

THE SPICE-BOX OF EARTH
POEMS
by Leonard Cohen

"It is good to see in print in this country the perceptive and finely-felt verses of a Canadian writer such as Leonard Cohen. . . . The original voice of this writer speaks eloquently for a new generation of Montreal poets."—LEON EDEL $3.75

STONER

by John Williams

"A moving and truthful account of a man's whole life. Mr. Williams' inside knowledge of the progression of teaching, and his novelist's grasp of character and incident make the quiet life of Stoner a genuine reading experience . . . one of the best academic novels I have ever read."—CARLOS BAKER $4.95

EMMANUEL

by Nicole Vidal

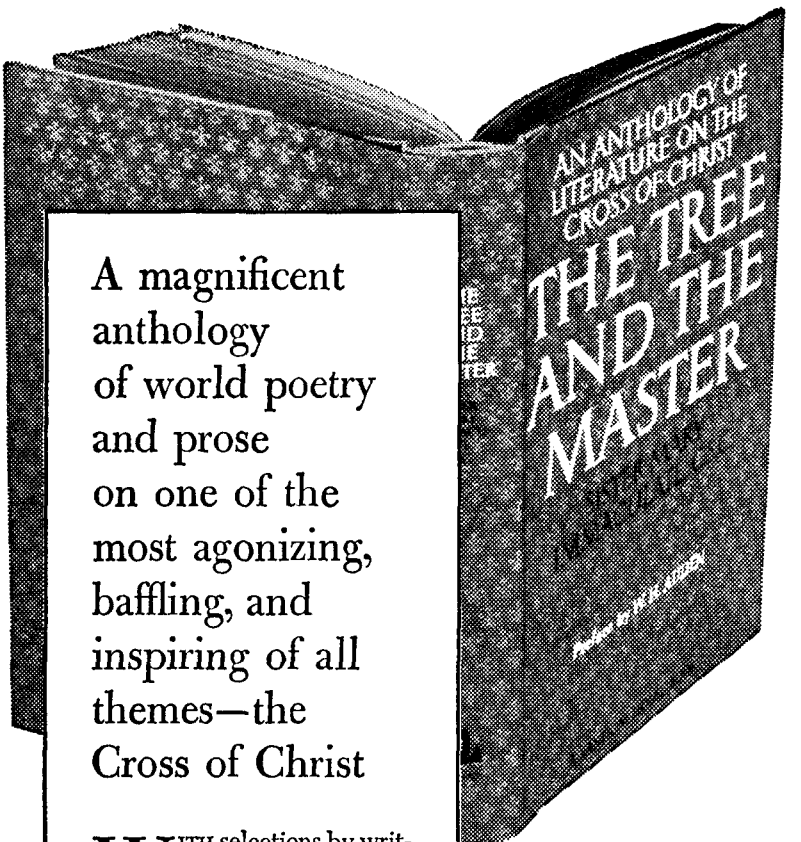
This novel from the French about a Jewish boy whose mother believes him to be the Messiah, moves to a profoundly stirring climax in Palestine during the birth-throes of the State of Israel. "A rich, full novel, dignified and humane."
—PHYLLIS BENTLEY $4.95

NOT FOR PUBLICATION
AND OTHER STORIES
by Nadine Gordimer

Searching always for the hidden springs of human action, Miss Gordimer writes of her beloved Africa, torn by hope and despair. Using unlooked-for occasions, she exposes the long-imprisoned forces that are now threatening to tear her world apart. $4.95

THE VIKING PRESS, 625 Madison Ave., New York, N. Y. 10022

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



A magnificent anthology of world poetry and prose on one of the most agonizing, baffling, and inspiring of all themes—the Cross of Christ

With selections by writers of many eras and cultures, ranging from Biblical times to twentieth-century New York – including King David, St. John of the Cross, Pär Lagerkvist, Flannery O'Connor, Robert Lowell, Dylan Thomas, T. S. Eliot, Graham Greene, and many others. There are over a dozen entirely new translations from French, Italian, German, Spanish, Norse, and Middle English.

Edited by
SISTER MARY IMMACULATE, C.S.C.

Preface by
W. H. AUDEN

$6.00, now at your bookstore
RANDOM HOUSE
457 Madison Ave., N.Y., N.Y. 10022

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"A distinguished collection... should be widely read."—SAUL BELLOW

Now available in book form...
ten outstanding stories from
THE HUDSON REVIEW

THE MODERN IMAGE

Edited by Frederick Morgan
Introduction by Robert M. Adams

The contributors and their stories

GEORGE P. ELLIOTT
The NRACP

HARRY MULISCH
What Happened to Sergeant Masuro?

FRANK BUTLER
To the Wilderness I Wander

VALDEMAR KARKLINS
The Tunnel

H. W. BLATTNER
Sound of a Drunken Drummer

HERBERT GOLD
One Sunday Morning at the Russian Bath

WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS
The Farmers' Daughters

BEN MADDOW
In a Cold Hotel

VLADIMIR NABOKOV
The Vane Sisters

ITALO SVEVO
This Indolence of Mine

At all bookstores • $4.50

W. W. NORTON & COMPANY, INC.
55 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y. 10003

Publishers of the novels of **ANTHONY BURGESS.**
Just published: **THE LONG DAY WANES** ($6.50).
Previously published:
A CLOCKWORK ORANGE, DEVIL OF A STATE, HONEY FOR THE BEARS, NOTHING LIKE THE SUN, THE RIGHT TO AN ANSWER, THE WANTING SEED ($3.95 each).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

EDITORIAL DIRECTOR: *Frederick Morgan*
EDITORS: *Joseph Bennett, Mary Emma Elliott*
MANAGING EDITOR: *Bettie M. Wellons*

THE Hudson Review

VOLUME XVIII
NUMBER 2
SUMMER 1965

CONTENTS

The Ambiguity of Fame	E. M. CIORAN	171
Crosswinds; Park West *(poems)*	JACK MARSHALL	182
Four Poems	WILLIAM DICKEY	188
One Night for Several Samurai *(story)*	JOSEPH WHITEHILL	193
The Conquest *(poem)*	LYSANDER KEMP	230
Three Poems	ALAN SILLITOE	232
Equinox; Cages *(poems)*	RUTH FAINLIGHT	234
Mary Barnard's Sappho	BURTON RAFFEL	236
Theatre Chronicle	JOHN SIMON	242
The Red Desert: Neurosis à la Mode	STEPHEN TAYLOR	252
Music and Ballet Chronicle	B. H. HAGGIN	259
Controversy		
The Writer's Duty and His Predicament	HANS J. MORGENTHAU	269
With a reply by NORMAN PODHORETZ		
Notes on Contributors		277
Reviews		
The Countess' Hat	HOWARD GREEN	278
An Island of Form	F. D. REEVE	290
The Big Show is Always About to Begin	GERALD WEALES	293
New Poems, Ancient and Modern	ROGER SALE	299
Opera Misconstrued	JOSEPH KERMAN	309
The Modern and How It Grew	MARVIN MUDRICK	313

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Chard Powers Smith
(AUTHOR OF ARTILLERY OF TIME)

Where the Light Falls

A Portrait of Edwin Arlington Robinson

A biography and a detailed study of his work, by a longtime intimate friend.
$7.50

Hayden Carruth

Nothing for Tigers

Poems 1959-1964

"The versatility of his (Carruth's) vision and language place him among the handful of good poets in his generation."—ALLEN TATE
$3.95

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY, 60 Fifth Ave., N. Y., N. Y. 10011

Looking for a Publisher?

We publish books for the technical and academic fields that meet the exacting demands of scholarship. Our special imprint, *University Books*, is reserved for deserving works in the technical field.

Here at Exposition Press, we offer a complete publishing service. Years of experience with texts, scholarly works, Americana, biographies and other fields of general interest, enable us to publish books that are expertly edited, designed and promoted. High editorial standards and quality of design and production have won the respect of libraries, schools, booksellers and critics. Your inquiries and manuscripts are invited.

FREE: Two fact-filled brochures containing a detailed description of our subsidy plan including a breakdown of contract terms and typical costs are available on request. References furnished.

Please write Dept. 171 G

EXPOSITION PRESS, INC.

386 Park Ave. So., New York 16, N. Y.

THE HUDSON REVIEW is published quarterly by The Hudson Review, Inc., 65 East 55th St. New York, N. Y. 10022. Subscription $5.00 per year in U. S.; foreign including Canada $5.50. Single copy, $1.50; U. S. Distributor: B. de Boer, 188 High St., Nutley, N. J. 07110. Business and subscriptions in England: B. H. Blackwell, Ltd., The Broad Street, Oxford. Manuscripts will not be returned unless accompanied by stamped, self-addressed envelopes. Opinions expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the editors. Copyright © 1965 by The Hudson Review, Inc. Registered U. S. Patent Office. Second Class postage paid at Richmond, Virginia. Member of The Council of Literary Magazines. Indexed in The International Index. Publication office: 2901 Byrdhill Road, Richmond, Virginia 23205.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

COLUMBIA COLUMBIA

THE TRAGIC DRAMA OF WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

Figures in a Dance

LEONARD E. NATHAN An examination of Yeats' dramatic theories and theatrical experience, this book shows the development of Yeats as a tragic dramatist. *$7.50*

MATTHEW ARNOLD AND JOHN STUART MILL

EDWARD ALEXANDER By comparing Arnold and Mill, this book clarifies the classical concepts of humanism and liberalism with relevance to our age. *$6.50*

EMOTION IN THE THOUGHT OF SARTRE

JOSEPH P. FELL, III The author tests the adequacy of Sartre's phenomenological method and his theories of consciousness and motivation by relating these elements to his entire philosophy. *$6.75*

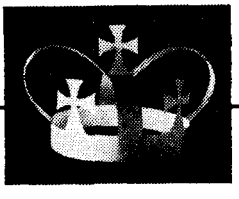
FIVE NOVELISTS OF THE PROGRESSIVE ERA

ROBERT W. SCHNEIDER Mr. Schneider views the transition in American intellectual history, 1890-1917, in the works of Howells, Crane, Dreiser, Norris, and Churchill. *$7.50*

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY PRESS

2960 Broadway

New York, N. Y. 10027



COLUMBIA COLUMBIA

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

JOIN GRAPHIC CIRCLE

Beiné Hager 16 × 23

Build a valuable collection of original art at less than the cost of reproductions.

For the modest sum of $3.00 a month ($36.00 yearly membership) you receive 12 original numbered and signed Lithographs, Etchings, Woodcuts or Silk Screens by Contemporary German Artists, along with a Biography.

Each edition is limited to 100 . . . and are shipped ppd. & duty free. Satisfaction guaranteed—

For Free Brochure
Dept. "HR"

GRAPHIC CIRCLE® GORDON'S FIFTH AVENUE GALLERY

WA 9-5171
68 Fifth Ave., New York 10011

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

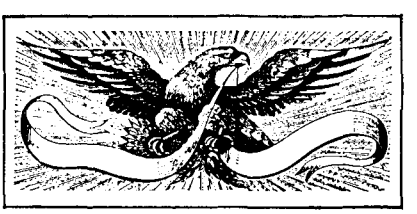
AARON COPLAND says,

"For the first time the whole panorama of contemporary American composition has been brought into focus by a perceptive and qualified writer-musician, an Englishman at that . . . An indispensable book not only for music fans and jazz buffs but for anyone interested in the development of American culture in the 20th century."

Wilfrid Mellers'

MUSIC IN A NEW FOUND LAND

THEMES AND DEVELOPMENTS IN THE HISTORY OF AMERICAN MUSIC



BORZOI BOOKS FIFTY YEARS

$6.95 • now at better bookstores

ALFRED · A · KNOPF

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE *Southern Review*

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY AT LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY

IN RECENT ISSUES

Winter, 1965—Poems by Louis Simpson, Kathleen Raine, James Dickey, Catherine Davis
(Vol. 1, No. 1)
Essays by Graham Hough on Ransom, T. R. Henn on Yeats, Glauco Cambon on Faulkner, Malcolm Cowley on the Agrarians, Paul West on D. H. Lawrence
Fiction by Harris Downey, Mavis Gallant

Spring, 1965—Poems by William Stafford, May Swenson, Ann Stanford, Richard Eberhart
(Vol. 1, No. 2)
Essays by Josephine Herbst, Kathleen Raine, Eliseo Vivas, J. M. Cohen, Samuel French Morse, Frederick J. Hoffman
Fiction by Anne Tyler, Reynolds Price

Summer, 1965—Anniversary issue celebrating thirtieth year of the founding. Contributors: Kay Boyle, Cleanth Brooks, Robert Penn Warren, Allen Tate, Eudora Welty, John Crow Ransom, Katherine Anne Porter, Max Lerner, Caroline Gordon, and others.
(Vol. 1, No. 3)

Subscription: $4.00 per year—USA, Mexico, Canada
$5.00 per year—Overseas

• • •

THE *Southern Review*

DRAWER D, UNIVERSITY STATION
BATON ROUGE, LA. 70803

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Announcing
the
Current

DELTA PRIZE NOVEL AWARD

for a work of outstanding fiction to be published in hardcover and paperback

Judges

JEAN STAFFORD
LOUIS AUCHINCLOSS
GORE VIDAL

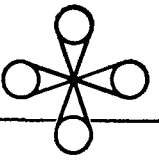
Deadline January 31, 1966. The winning entry will be announced on or before June 1 and published the following fall.

No contest forms required. Write to Delta Prize Novel, Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 750 Third Avenue, New York, N. Y. 10017 for rules and details.

1965-1966 PRIZE $10,000

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Bollingen Series



THE COLLECTED WORKS OF
PAUL VALÉRY
Edited by JACKSON MATHEWS

Planned in fifteen volumes, the first collected edition in English is presented in new translations from the French, prepared especially for the edition by various poets and scholars. Each volume is introduced by a contemporary literary figure and includes editorial notes which clarify the allusions and other references which might escape the American or English reader. The poetic works are accompanied by the French text.

AVAILABLE NOW:

Volume 3. PLAYS.
Translated by David Paul and Robert Fitzgerald. With an Introduction by Francis Fergusson and a Memoir by Igor Stravinsky. Includes all of Valéry's writings for the theater, with two related prose pieces. $4.50

Volume 4. DIALOGUES.
Translated by William McCausland Stewart. With two prefaces by Wallace Stevens. All the formal dialogues, including *Eupalinos* and six others. $3.00

Volume 7. THE ART OF POETRY.
Translated by Denise Folliot. With an Introduction by T. S. Eliot. Twenty-eight essays and addresses on poets, poetics, and poetry. $4.50

Volume 10. HISTORY AND POLITICS.
Translated by Denise Folliot and Jackson Mathews. With an Introduction by Salvador de Madariaga. Writings on the League of Nations, Women in Politics, Europe, the East, World War II. $5.00

Volume 12. DEGAS, MANET, MORISOT.
Translated by David Paul with an Introduction by Douglas Cooper. Contains Valéry's book on Degas, a long essay on Corot, others on Berthe Morisot, Manet, Daumier, and Renoir, and other writings on the fine arts. $3.50

Volume 13. AESTHETICS
Translated by Ralph Manheim. With an Introduction by Herbert Read. Reflections on the arts, including the delightful essay "Man and the Sea Shell". $4.00

Just published:
Volume 5. IDÉE FIXE.
Translated by David Paul with an Introduction by Philip Wheelwright and a preface by Jackson Mathews. An offhand, personal, amusing dialogue of ideas on the nature of man and his haphazard relations with the world. $3.00

Please order from your bookstore. Published by Bollingen Foundation. Distributed by Pantheon Books, 22 East 51st St., New York 10022. For detailed catalogue, write to Bollingen Series, 140 East 62nd St., New York 10021

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

E. M. CIORAN

The Ambiguity of Fame

If we all confessed our most secret desire, the desire behind all our schemes and all our acts, we would say: "I want to be praised." But no one could bring himself to that, since it is less disgraceful to commit a loathesome act than to divulge so pitiful and humiliating a weakness, deriving from a sense of isolation and insecurity suffered with equal intensity by the lucky and the unlucky alike. No one is *sure* of what he is, or of what he does. Aware as we may be of our own merits, we are eaten by anxiety and to overcome it we ask only to be deceived, to be approved of by no matter whom, for no matter what. An observer can always detect an imploring look in the eye of anyone who has just finished any venture or work, or who sets out to do anything at all. The weakness is universal; and if God seems exempt, it is because, once Creation was a fact, He could not exact praise from His witnesses since there were none, but He did bestow praise upon Himself, to be sure, and at the end of each day!

Just as everyone pushes to get ahead of others and make a name for himself, man in the beginning must have been driven by a vague impulse to surpass the animals, to assert himself at their expense, to *shine,* whatever the cost. Once his vital economy was upset and so became the source of his ambition if not his energy, he was thrown into competition with all living things—even with himself—by his folly for outstripping others, which, as it worsened, became his distinguishing mark. In the state of nature, he alone wished to be *important,* he alone among the animals detested anonymity and did his utmost to escape it. To push himself forward: such was, and such remains his dream. It is hard to believe that he would have sacrificed Paradise out of the simple desire to know good and evil; but on the other hand, we can perfectly well imagine him risking everything to be somebody. Let us rewrite *Genesis:* if man squandered his initial happiness, it was not so much from a taste for knowledge as a thirst for fame. Once he had felt its lure, he went over to the side of the Devil. And it is

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

really diabolic, both in principle and in its manifestations. Because of it, the most gifted of the angels wound up as an adventurer, and more than one saint as a clown. One who has known fame or even come near it can never turn away; he will stop at nothing however low or vile to keep within its aura. When he cannot save his soul, he hopes to save at least his name. Would man, the usurper, have succeeded in his ambition to make a privileged place for himself in the universe without the will to have himself talked about, without the obsession, the mania for making a big splash? If such a mania took hold of any animal, no matter how "backward," that animal would burn up the road and overtake man.

What would happen if your desire for glory disappeared? With it would go all the torments that goad you, that drive you to produce, realize your ambitions, go beyond yourself. Once rid of them, you would be satisfied with what you are and withdraw behind your own frontiers, having conquered and abolished the will to be supreme and out of bounds. Once freed from the domination of the Serpent, you would bear no trace of the ancient temptation, the stigma distinguishing you from the other creatures. But would you still be *man*? At the very most, you would be a *conscious* plant.

By likening God to pure mind, the theologians revealed that they had no sense of the process of creation, of *doing* in general. The mind in itself is not fitted to produce; it conceives projects, but to carry them out it must call on an impure energy to set them in motion. It is the mind, not the flesh, that is weak; it becomes strong only when stimulated by a dubious thirst, by some reprehensible impulse. The more suspect the passion, the more it keeps the one under its spell from producing empty and meaningless works. Instead of blaming a mind dominated by cupidity, jealousy, or vanity, we ought to praise it. What would it be without them? Almost nothing, which is to say, it would be pure mind or, more precisely, angelic mind; for by definition angels are sterile and ineffectual, like the light in which they vegetate, the light that begets nothing, deprived as it is of the dark, subterranean principle residing in all forms of life. God seems far better endowed, since

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

He has His element of darkness: without its dynamic imperfection, He would have remained in a state of paralysis or vacancy, incapable of playing the rôle we know. To it He owes everything, including His *Being*. Nothing fruitful and true is either completely luminous or completely honorable. To say of a poet's weaknesses that they are a "blot on his genius" is to misunderstand the mainspring and the secret, if not of his talent, then surely of his "yield." Anything we do, at however high a level, comes out of the immediate and carries its mark: no one creates either in the absolute or in the void. If we could escape the *human* universe we are trapped in, why would we produce at all and for whom? The more interested we become in *man*, the less *men* interest us; however, it is because of them and the opinion they form of us that we bestir ourselves—proof of the incredible hold that flattery has on all minds, the refined and unrefined alike. It is a mistake to imagine that the recluse is unaffected by it; he is more susceptible than one might think, because, not often being subjected to its charm and its poison, he does not know how to defend himself against it. However indifferent he may be to most things, he is not indifferent to praise. Since he does not receive much, he is unaccustomed to it; just let the occasion arise when it is lavished on him and he will drink it in with a childish and sickening avidity. He may be well versed in a number of subjects, but he is a novice in this. Still, let us say in his defense that all praise is physically exciting and produces a delightful shiver that can be suppressed or mastered only by the discipline, the self-control acquired by long experience in society, by frequenting the clever and the two-faced. To tell the truth, nothing—neither suspicion nor contempt—immunizes us against the effects of flattery: even though we distrust or think poorly of someone, we will pay attention at least to the favorable judgments he is willing to make of us, and if they are lyrical and exaggerated enough to seem spontaneous and uncalculating, we will even change our opinion of him. Everybody appears to be satisfied with himself, but in reality, nobody is. Must we then, out of charity, flatter our friends and enemies and all mortals without exception, and say "amen" to all their foolishness? Self-doubt worked on human beings to such a point that they invented love as a remedy, a tacit pact between two unfortunates to overestimate and praise each other shame-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lessly. Aside from the mad, no one is indifferent to praise or blame; so long as we are somewhat normal, we are susceptible to the one and the other; if we become immune to them, what is there left to seek among our fellow men? Unquestionably, it is humiliating to react in the way they do; on the other hand, it is hard to rise above all the miseries besetting and weighing them down. Being man is no solution; ceasing to be man is no solution either.

The slightest distance we put between ourselves and the human world disturbs our will to realize ourselves, to surpass and crush others. The angel's misfortune is that he did not have to exert himself to enter glory; he was born there, he is in his own element, consubstantial with it. After that, what could he possibly hope for? He lacks even the resource of creating desires for himself. If producing and existing are identical, then there could scarcely be a more unreal and desolate condition than his.

Detachment is not without its risk. As we tend toward it, we forsake a proportionate part of ourselves; we run counter to our ambitions and inclinations, or sabotage them, rather, without really conquering them. To play at wisdom when we are not predestined to it is dangerous: we lose more than one enriching fault necessary to the completion of a creative work. To slough off old Adam is to deprive ourselves of both our resources and our means, and to plunge of our own free will into the impasse of purity. Without the accumulation of our past, our filth, our corruption—recent as well as original—our minds would come to a standstill. Woe unto him who does not sacrifice his salvation!

Since everything important, great, and extraordinary that is done emanates from the desire for fame, what happens when it weakens or dies out and we are ashamed that we wanted to count in others' eyes? To understand how we might come to such a pass, let us recall those moments when our instincts are completely dormant. We are still alive, but that scarcely matters to us; it is a fact bereft of all interest; truth and falsehood are nothing but words, one as good as the other, equally meaningless. What is real, what is not real: how can we know since we have passed beyond the stage of distinguishing the illusory from the real, of bothering to categorize appearances. Our needs and desires are parallel to us, and our dreams are dreamed by someone else in us. Even our

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

fears are no longer ours. Not that they diminish. They increase, rather, but they do not concern us; they draw on their own resources; they are free and lordly and lead an autonomous life: we serve only as support, dwelling-place, *address*; we give them lodging: and that is strictly all. Our fears live apart, develop and spread, playing their usual tricks without consulting us. But we do not care in the least. We let them have their own way, bothering them as little as they bother us, and in our impassive and undeceived condition, we watch the spectacle they provide for us.

Just as we can imagine at will the opposite direction from the one life has taken and re-trace the species, we can also follow history back to its beginnings and even beyond. That is a necessary process to those who break away from the tyranny of opinion and no longer belong to our epoch. The wish to be respected may be excused in certain cases; but when there is *nobody* we want to impress, why exhaust ourselves to be somebody, or in fact even to *be*?

After once hoping that our name would be engraved around the sun, we then go to the opposite extreme and vow that it shall be totally obliterated and disappear forever. If our impatience to assert ourselves knew no limit, our impatience to efface ourselves knows none either. In pushing to heroic lengths our will to abdicate, we use all our energy to increase our obscurity and destroy the slightest trace of our passage on earth, even the dimmest memory of our life. We hate anyone who becomes attached to us, who depends on us or wants anything of us. The only concession we can still make to others is to disappoint them. In any case, they would never understand our desire to escape the overworking of the ego, our desire to stay on the threshold of consciousness without entering, to take cover in the deepest primordial silence, in wordless beatitude, the gentle stupor in which Creation lay before the fracas of the Word. Our need to hide, to quit the light, to be the least in everything, our transports of modesty in which we so far outdo the moles as to make them seem ostentatious, our nostalgia for the unborn and the unnamed—all these are ways of undoing the accomplishments of evolution so that, by a backward leap, we may repossess the instant that preceded the commotion of *Becoming*.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

When we have exalted the idea of self-effacement and look with contempt on the words of the least *self-effaced* of modern men: "All my life I have sacrificed tranquillity, self-interest, and happiness to my destiny,"—it is not without a certain satisfaction that we imagine the contrary, the desperation of the disillusioned who, to leave no trace behind, bends all efforts toward a sole end: the suppression of his identity, the evaporation of his ego. His wish to pass unperceived is so vehement that he makes a system, a divinity, of Insignificance and kneels before it. No longer to exist for anybody, to live as if he had never lived, to blot out events, to refuse to profit by time and place, to unsubjugate himself forever! To be free is to emancipate yourself from the quest of a destiny, refusing to join with either the saved or the damned; to be free is the practice of being nothing.

He who has given all that he can is a more painful spectacle than one who has not been able, nor even wished, to draw attention to himself and has died with all his real or supposed talents intact, with all his capacities unexploited and his merits unrecognized: our imaginations are stimulated by the many versions his career could have had, which is to say, he still lives; but the other, since he is fixed, finished, and hideous in his success, evokes a corpse. In all realms, those who interest us are the ones who, out of weakness or scruple, put off indefinitely the moment of resolving to excel. Their advantage over the others is in understanding that man does not realize himself with impunity, that he must pay for every act he adds to the pure fact of living. Nature abhors the talents we have acquired at her expense, she abhors even those she has meted out and that we have cultivated excessively; she punishes zeal—that road to perdition—and warns us that it is always to our own detriment that we drive ourselves to excel. Is there anything more harmful than a superabundance of good qualities, a congestion of merits? Let us hang on to our deficiencies and not forget that we can be more easily destroyed by an excess of virtue than of vice.

What presumption and what strength to believe that we are *known* by God, to seek His complicity and His adulation, to despise all approbation except His! There is nothing like religion for satisfying to the full our good as well as our bad tendencies.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Which attains the greater glory, the man to whom no "kingdom on earth" is closed, or the outcast who has nothing but his faith? We cannot weigh the idea that God deigns to have of us against that of our fellow men. Without the desire to be *appreciated* in heaven, without the certainty of enjoying a kind of renown up above, there would be no prayer. The mortal who has prayed sincerely, be it only for once in his life, has tasted the supreme form of glory. What other accomplishment could he hope for after that? He could only rest tranquilly until the end of his days, with the summit of his career scaled and his mission here below fulfilled.

The privilege of being known to God may not seem enough to some. At least, such was the opinion of our first ancestor who wearied of passive celebrity. He took it into his head to impress the creatures, and even the Creator Himself whose omniscience he envied less than His pomp, His showy side, His *glitter*. Inconsolable for having to play a rôle of second importance, he plunged headlong, out of spite and a taste for histrionics, into a series of exhausting performances, into history—not so much to supplant the Divinity as to *dazzle* Him.

If we would burrow deeper into the knowledge of ourselves, no one can help us so much as the braggart. He conducts himself in the way we would if some vestige of timidity and modesty did not remain to us. He says aloud what he thinks of himself, proclaiming his own merits, while our timidity condemns us either to murmur or keep silent about ours. When we hear him go on ecstatically hour after hour about his exploits, we shudder at the thought that it would take very little for everyone to do the same.

Since he prefers himself to the universe openly, and not secretly as we others do, he has no reason to play the game of being misunderstood or rejected. And since no one else will bother about what he is and is worth, he attends to this himself. There are no restrictions, no subtleties, no modifications in his judgments of himself. He is satisfied to overflowing; he has found what all pursue and few find.

But pity the man who dares not vaunt his own talents and advantages! He loathes all who do not value them, and loathes himself for not being able to exalt, or at least exhibit them. What a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

deliverance it would be for the mind if boasting was considered the thing to do, was not only tolerated but obligatory! Psychiatry would no longer have a function if we felt free to divulge our high opinion of ourselves, or if we always had somebody at hand to flatter us. But however happy the braggart, his happiness is not without flaw; he cannot always find someone to listen; and as for what he must go through when reduced to silence—it is better not to think about it.

Full of ourselves as we may be, we live in an anxious bitterness that we could escape only if the stones themselves took pity and flattered us fulsomely. But since they are stubbornly mute, all we can do is to flounder in our own torment and feed on our own bile.

If more and more we pant after fame, it is because we have substituted it for the belief in immortality. The disappearance of a chimera as deeply rooted as it is justifiable necessarily leaves the mind in confusion and in a state of frenetic suspension. No one can do without a semblance of immortality, and still less can we keep from seeking it everywhere, in any kind of reputation, beginning with the literary. Ever since we began to see death as an absolute end, *everybody writes.* From this stems the idolatry of success and, as a consequence, subservience to *the public,* a power both pernicious and blind, the curse of the century, a vile version of Fate.

Fame might have some meaning against a background of eternity, but it no longer has any at all in a world that is governed by time and where, by a further misfortune, even time itself is *threatened.* The universal futility which so affected the ancients, we accept as an obvious fact that neither surprises nor afflicts us, and we cling with joyous hearts to the certainties of a precarious and worthless fame. Let us add that man might have had some interest in being somebody in those epochs when he was a rarity, but that no longer holds now that he is devaluated. Why should we bother about anybody's respect on a planet invaded by flesh, when the idea of a neighbor is empty of all content, and we cannot love mankind either in the mass or in detail? To have no higher wish than to stand apart from them is already a symptom of spiritual death. The horror of fame comes from a horror of men: men are all alike, their very numbers justify our aversion to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

them. The time is not far off when we will have to be in a state of grace to be capable, not of loving—that would be impossible—but simply of enduring the sight of them. In those times when plagues providentially cleaned up cities, the individual in his capacity of survivor justly inspired some respect: he was still a *being*. Now there are no more beings; there is nothing but a swarm of moribund people tainted with longevity and all the more hateful for knowing so well how to manage their dying. We would prefer any animal to them, if only because they hunt down the animals, spoiling and profaning a landscape once ennobled by the presence of beasts. Paradise is an absence of human beings. The more we think about Adam's act, the less we can excuse it: he was surrounded by animals. What more could he have wanted? and how could he have failed to value the happiness of not having to confront at every instant the ignoble curse written on our faces? Since serenity is not even conceivable until our race disappears, let us in the meantime stop martyrizing ourselves over nothing and turn toward the part of us over which no one has a hold. Our view of things changes when, faced with our own inner solitude, we discover that there is no reality except in our own depths and that everything else is a snare and delusion. Can anything that he does not have already be given to the one who knows this truth, and can anything that will sadden or humiliate him be taken away? There is no freedom unless we triumph over shame and the fear of shame. If the conqueror of appearances is really never to give in to them again, he must rise not only above honors, but above honor itself. With complete disregard for the contempt of his fellow beings, he could then display in their midst the pride of a discredited god. . . .

How comforting it is to believe ourselves beyond praise or blame, no longer to care whether we cut a fine or a sorry figure! A strange comfort punctuated with moments of oppression, a deliverance coupled with anxiety.

No matter how far advanced we are in our apprenticeship to detachment, we are unable none the less to say exactly where we stand with the desire for fame: do we still want it or are we completely indifferent to it? Most probably we have only buried it and it continues to torment us without our knowing it. We rise above it only in moments of supreme dejection when neither the living

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nor the dead would recognize themselves in us. Otherwise, our lives are less simple, for in so far as we desire at all, we implicitly desire fame. Even if we have no illusions left, we still desire it, since the appetite for it survives when we have lost all the others. One who has had a full taste of it, has really soaked in it, can never give it up, and unless he always has it he will succumb to bitterness, insolence, torpor. The more evident our deficiencies become, the more clear-cut and attractive it is; our emptiness calls to it and if it does not respond, we accept the ersatz: notoriety. In the same measure that we aspire to it, we flounder in the insoluble: we hope to vanquish time by means of time, to endure in the ephemeral, to reach the indestructible through history, and most ridiculous of all, we want to be applauded by the very people we despise. It is our misfortune to have found as a remedy for the loss of eternity only this delusion, this pathetic obsession from which we can free ourselves only by rooting ourselves in Being. But who can take root in Being since we are *men* only because we cannot?

To believe in history is to covet the possible, to postulate the qualitative superiority of the imminent over the immediate, to imagine that Becoming is in itself rich enough to render eternity superfluous. But let man cease to believe in history and no event will have the slightest significance. He will then be concerned only with the two ends of Time, but less with its beginning than its end, its consummation, in what will come afterward, when the thirst for glory abates and along with it all the other appetites; when, freed from the force that drove him on, and relieved of his adventure, he will see opening out before him an *era without desire.*

If it is forbidden us to recover our original innocence, we can, on the other hand, imagine another and try to arrive at it through a knowledge stripped of perversity, cleansed of its faults, deepened, purified. Such a transformation would amount to the conquest of a second innocence which would have the advantage over the first, since it came about after milleniums of doubt and lucidity, of no longer being a prey to the now threadbare glamor of the Serpent. Once Knowledge and the Fall were disjoined, the act

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of knowing would flatter nobody's vanity, nor would the inevitably pushing imprudence of our minds give us demonic pleasure. We would conduct ourselves as if we had violated no mystery and we would view our own exploits of whatever sort with detachment, if not contempt. This would mean no more and no less than *beginning Knowledge all over again,* that is, constructing another history disencumbered of the ancient curse, and one in which we might be allowed to find again the mark of divinity we carried before the break with the rest of creation. We cannot live with the sense of total guilt, with this stamp of infamy on all our undertakings. Since it is our corruption that causes us to go beyond ourselves, that makes us efficacious and fruitful, our urge to produce betrays and indicts us. If our works testify against us, is it not because they derive from the need to camouflage our Fall, our need to deceive others and, even more, ourselves? *Doing* is tainted with an original sin from which *Being* seems exempt. And since all that we do proceeds from our loss of innocence, it is only by repudiating our acts and loathing ourselves that we can be redeemed.

[*Translated by Marthiel Mathews*]

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

JACK MARSHALL

Crosswinds

1.

In Kivu province Hutu vassals turn
on their Watusi lords . . . a thousand souls a day
clot the riverbanks say the newspapers.
Here in America I watch the sooty water towers
over Harlem sweat, with a mind to burst.
The landlord Jew, in his bar
long enough to count last night's receipts,
heads home to the sterilized suburbs.
In Central Park smutty, defoliated trees
fidget with omens that ruffle the uniforms
of nurse and nun; the very pointed branches ready
to spring. . . . White America pierced through the heart
by a rank forest stalking
its inheritance on all fours; watered by falls
the natives called "The Smoke That Thunders."

2.

Favorites of the god of Rwanda,
whose ancestors rose from dry Ethiopian plains
driving before them their longhorns, sacred Nganda,
crossed the Nile and Nubian desert to find
their promised land and fall on masters
of pygmy hunters, Hutu, stunted diggers,
tillers of primal mud, reapers of cassava and manioc,
who built Watusi's rattan huts and planted maize
on the terraced hillsides, served the milk of divinity
to the slim dandy leaning in his sedan chair,
dreaming of a lion's haunch, a winged torso—
each slender, sable limb longing to become a sphinx.

3.

America, hugging your knees in the corner,
glued to the baby-talk of the radio,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

once the only daughter of heaven
now won't hear the fishy-breathed Mongol
panting outside the window, wanting in.
Whitebread body, waitress-face, the virgin
still wants her way or will not come out.
Something she has let go undone
lest the deed rob her of innocence, turns
in her now, turns the gripped image of her purity
into the murder of her neglect. . . .
The ego, breaking up, clings to its own hair;
the only green within memory, it seems,
an avocado at her window leans
dreaming of sunflowers in Spain.

4.

Unhusked like chaff to Hutu flails,
Hamite stalks blow back on the wind into nothingness.
Tall and tall lengthens the shadow of their fall,
hunters turned prey in a further turning of the game.
High-jumpers of the veldt,
beehive coiffed, in profile Pharaohs
who by courtly wit and honeyed verses
decreed laughter unfit for such nobles as they . . .
a crudeness of slaves.

5.

"Harlequins they are, by nature high-spirited
and given to bouts of wild abandon,
dancing and chanting in savage rhythms
unlike their Christian neighbors
who are in bed by midnight."

6.

Remember, in Lagos, the arms of rancid women in tin shacks,
dung and drunkenness, the moon's white stain
and starlight twinkling on the teeth of a native,
mouth open, gurgling in a ditch.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The voyage had come to that.
Then morning, a mammy sashaying to market,
the fluted jug on her head, round and full
as her body brimming over, the living sun.
Night; the engines drumming
a highlife below deck moved the shining stevedores
to flex and free what awaited them
in the thicket of the dance; giving in
as though an easy ectasy always within reach
might open a circle and nature, drunkenly big-hearted,
make herself felt like a giantess
at whose laughter everything dances.

Shells, red ankle bells
heel clean the dusty air;
a spear of ebony each limb,
golden headdress, lion's hair,
sweep hills and grassland
for the stride of the antelope,
the spring of the cat.

7.

"Like children they are,
delighting in the whims and flights of imagination
over the regularity of economics.
At the bottom of their hearts
what they really fear is pedantry.
In the hands of pedants they die of grief."

Proud hunter necks bowed
into yokes to haul bales of booty to his ships,
seditious Indians of Hispaniola
moved Columbus to write his queen,
"Madame, the innocents have risen. Send hounds
and milder Negroes who delight in such labor."

And the captain, fearing the blind slave
would infect his fellows, cast him overboard.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

But others went blind, others overboard;
the affliction grew below deck
till every living soul aboard,
crew and slave, white and black,
each went dark inside.

8.

Watusi, blood-brother to Somali, Galla, Fulani,
Masai, Mandingo, herded into kraals
that penned their royal cattle—pure pedigree,
horns sand-polished, coats rubbed with the butterfat
their udders gushed; each cow attended by a youth
robed in bark-cloth, who never spoke to it but softly,
catching its dung on a woven straw mat.

9.

From London set sail a hundred Englishmen
for Virginia, "Earth's only paradise,"
to seeke not talke, nor faith, nor common worke,
but dig and wash, refine and load
the bright bullion, gold. . . .
Found fair meadows and goodly tall trees,
with such fresh waters running through the woods
they were almost ravished with the sight thereof;
prairies so broad and level,
if a man lay on his back he lost sight of the earth!

10.

And though their kingdom lay open to slavers
hauling Negroes from the markets of Zanzibar,
the Mwami's loyal spearmen held to ranks
and swung the Arab horsemen to the Persian Gulf.
They must have heard their slaves grumble
and point to the iron collars biting into the blacks
whose bodies so packed the ships bounds for the new
Americas,
the visionary Jefferson said, "I tremble for my country
when I reflect that God is just."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

11.

Who cared to know the rhythms of a dance unfulfilled,
coiling tightly in the chest to kill or be killed?
Gentle Livingstone opened Africa
to "sanitary reformers, inventors of telegraphs and steam
engines,
Christ and commerce, the soldiers of Sebastopol."
Soon the sabre-rattling Kaiser, the League and Leopold,
like locusts lit on a leaf and woke the sleeping giant;
and Africa's rhino head crashed the twentieth century.

12.

Pink, polyethylene flamingos add an air
of make-believe to the lawns of Dixie;
they step on one light foot
and disturb no one's sleep.
On street-corners in New York,
Negroes in tight suits
flick copies of Muhammed Speaks
at strolling couples, like switchblades.
A glowering fury spreads to quiet country lanes
where coal-black wrought-iron stableboys
rush out to meet you, noose in hand.

Park West

1.

Sultry as bedposts, the subway lamps
Shine. Beside him, padding up the stairs
Like a seeing-eye dog, a draft romps
Ahead, lifts their dresses in pairs
From behind, then dashes back to be petted . . .
His thoughts, hands almost, palms wet.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

For all the good they do
He might as well be blind.
Out of the corner of his eye
He watches life going in all directions,
Like his mind.

2.
Central Park steams
Like a jungle; each streetlamp,
A dustbowl. No leaf, he leans
Feeling his sapped roots rooted to thin air.
Nothing that cares grows here
But bellies, bribes, habits
And hefty gutter rats that gorge on pyramids of filth
Left out overnight by the Negro janitor.

3.
On the walk: nylon flash,
Mother-of-pearl, scintillant swansdown
Puckers just inside the knee . . .
That's where his mind hinges.
Can he make the fringes kick higher, faster,
Like those nights in Dakar or Mozambique
When, for once, his mania came close
To getting a bellyful . . .
Then blacked out.

4.
Wondering how much to give in or pull
Away, astigmatic as a bull,
His lust squints, spies through white cashmere
The thick ogling hornrims of a black brassiere.
Burly, lounging in a doorway like a cop, night
Pokes this ash-heap Harlem with a flashlight,
Where each deaf-mute, pop-eyed soul drags
For a fix, grits, jabs
Once, and sees the stars' orgasms flare one by one,
And time fan out lightyears on the head of a pin.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

5.
Soul tapering to fingertips,
He wants to be that hidalgo
Wrapped in flaming emerald who walks on air in
Toledo . . .
But only death will make it so.
Trying to think of the past, his mind stretches
Up the Congo—shorelights running
On the current, on the deck;
Blades churning a featherbed of foam
And, in him, fear
By rote: "Don't look back. Do it here. Here!"

6.
Relieved, a light goes on
In his mind, then off, then on again,
Like a firefly he used to cup in his hand
As a child, make a wish, let go.
The way a Negro's hand turning palm up shades
Slowly from coal-black, bronze, to light,
Dawn's fist unclenches.

WILLIAM DICKEY

Nocturne

After you are asleep, and the night's quiet
smooths out the room, I listen to your breath
making clear to me that I am alone.

Day proves the opposite: how I am part
of institutions, of shared important rooms
full of relationship and dialogue,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the safe definitions of a language shared
by everyone I meet. Then I am good
like a small sun, and shine fluently.

And home to evening, the world of
two people's talk, unintelligible outside
the circle of candlelight and the drawn shades.

How each of us, talking, makes the other real
by knowing what word will follow, unconsciously
speaking with the other's favorite turn of phrase.

Until bedtime comes. You yawn, look up
for my kiss, huddle the blanket close.
You shut your eyes, and I turn out the light

and walk into a house altogether empty
except for myself, the same solitary
figure walking, for years, from room to room

asking a baptism from the wide dark,
a star to have meaning, an explanation
to link me entirely to your sleeping breath.

But the necessity to remain myself
is the only answer on the tongue of midnight,
said unemotionally through the lucid bells.

I love you when you are sleeping, even though
nightly we must ask each other's leave to wander
in different dreams. Through the cold house, alone

for another hour, I listen to you breathe
outside me, a separate fact, until I too am given
the comfortable sleep that disengages

knowledge and awareness, and can wait for dawn
in cessation, mark time until the sun,
rising, composes our certainties around us.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

End of Summer

So, in the smoke of another cigarette
the summer passes. We are drawn toward age
imperceptibly, only a flicker of days
at the corner of the eye, only the mouth set
less generously over the sharpening teeth.

Tomorrow summer ends, and the hard cry
of the ice will enfold us in our duties:
to be manageable and apt, to be intact
as long as the blood can pump, to settle into
the repetition of the half-looked-at days.

Frozen into the absolute city of the ice
shall I always be asking you how you are feeling
and you saying to me always, "I'm all right?"
Shall we exchange glances with the prosaic air
of people passing plates over a table?

What was it meant for, that the lucid blood
can hiss in the lung, the intent eye stare,
the little animal hairs stand up in terror?
Where was the explanation of ourselves
that must have spread, sunny, across the morning?

Only a stutter of night growing more often
and a clash of dry syllables, bleached straw-color
in the indifferent grass. Only the narrow wind
down from the mountain, the unanswerable
suggestion of the blue coldness yet to come.

Then summer ends, not having been understood.
Our eyes, the blind eyes of abandoned statues
pitted with age, swivel towards the horizon
where, walking with the pace of a mausoleum,
the believable shape of the hard ice comes on.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Ageing Lovers

They move with deference, as being aware
each that his body is his, and is the other's,
and to comfort the other, must be moved with care.

Therefore no recklessness in their twin motion
nor passionate haste of each to undo the other
into the youthful luxury of possession.

For in the withering night, under the dimmed stars
that make them old, they must be one another's
restraint against their acknowledged mortal fear.

Therefore no child's fury of ownership
that argues "Forever!" They are lent one another
only until their expressions close in sleep.

Therefore conduct themselves with ceremony
of gentleness, embracing one another
through a darkness of inseparable love and pity.

It shakes their hearts. Therefore even when they are
most truly the lips and tongues of one another,
they kiss through losses, and they move with care.

A Frank Talk

We must attend to things, body: drink less,
smoke less, weigh less. Already one kidney
signals danger, discolored flesh at the groin
is a sign of stomach cancer; we must reverse.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Admittedly the young voices of the classroom
do not see it; their muscles moving their skin
like horses twitching flies, they shout "Suddenly!"
Their aim is to be spent in a perfect now.

You and I have other concerns: to be sparse
as winter grass, brittle as intelligence,
to wither down to the tight circle of ourselves
persuading each other to be final and endure.

Youth, after all, the glitter of sun across
the smooth cheek, the easily flat belly,
will not serve us in the classical colonnade
where we are willing ourselves to become stone.

You ask, what if our direction leads only
to colostomies, the surgeon's rubber fingers
emptying us out, what if the nervous connections
fail, and we breathe a vegetable air?

Perhaps even that is usable: to think
as a squash thinks, or an embryo. Perhaps
we shall exceed experience, be at our last
entirely the waterfall, or the dividing rock.

But it can be done only by intent years
of holding on, cruelly, to less and less,
the grip clenching tighter on the smaller object
that is harder and worth more as it grows smaller.

To that end we must make a regimen: care
in all things, no late nights, no indulgences
in appetite. Saving ourselves through time
we must keep what remains of our identification

until we are small dense monuments, heavy
as dwarf stars, wise in a universe that excludes
from consideration the flaring gaseous shadows,
momentary and transparent, of the sudden young.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

JOSEPH WHITEHILL

One Night for Several Samurai

I

A SMALL MAN WITH A SHINING BLACK RAIN CAPE over his head ran from the lighted doorway of the dormitory, along the clipped yew hedge, and into the arched passage tunnel through the building. He stamped lightly, dancing, and swung the cape off to shake the rain from it. The man was Japanese. The rain cape had been issued to him in distant 1945 as part of his pilot's uniform; it was his only material possession remaining from that time, and, except for an inexpensive camera he had brought with him years ago on the ship, was the only Japanese thing he now owned.

He laid the wet cape on the brick floor of the passageway next to the telephone booth, and stirred the change in his coin purse for a dime. The booth was the old kind, made of dark wood and painted steel, with bubble-crusted chicken wire in the glass. The Japanese closed the folding door enough to make the feeble light turn on, then dropped in his dime and dialed. He bent the transmitter down in order to talk up into it. The night was just cold enough to let him see his breath.

The call was answered at the far end: "Hello, B.O.Q. Sergeant Hoxie."

"Good evening. This is John Moyama calling. May I speak with Major Bales, please, if he is in his room?"

"Major Bales? Well, sorry, sir. He's out. I believe he's on a little party over to the Officers' Club. You want that number?"

"Thank you, I have the number. Yes. Thank you. Good-by." He hung up the receiver and looked closely in his little leather notebook, then found another dime and dialed again. While he listened to the distant burr he watched the wind-bent rain toss and spark around the iron-basket coach lights at the open streetward end of the passageway.

"Officers' Club, Corp'ral Blue," said a Negro voice.

"Ah, Corporal. My name is John Moyama. I wonder if you would mind calling Major Bales to the telephone, please?"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"How were you spelling that name?"

"Moyama." Then he spelled it out.

"Hold on, sir, I'll see 'f he's here."

John heard the telephone put down. There was music and laughter, then, after several minutes, the approach of steps and the sound of a reaching sleeve, and the rushing hiss and tumble of carbon granules in the opposite transmitter. "This is Major Bales."

"Yes, Major. This is John Moyama here."

There was a short dead pause, then: "Sure, sure! Dr. Moyama. Yes, sir; yes, sir. Well. How's everything?" He overmodulated, and his sibilants verged on zees.

"Well, thank you. I called—"

"What's the problem? Dj'you try me at my quarters first?"

"Yes, I did. The man on telephone watch said you were there at the Officers' Club."

"Yo. I left word."

"I hope I am not interrupting any—"

"Not a bit, not a bit, no *sir*. You were to call any time, day or night. That's what you've got liaison for. . . . No, we're just sitting around, some of us." The major now spoke softly, as if into the cup of his hand over the transmitter. "So what's the sketch?"

"I am calling from the coin telephone outside the dormitory. Is it all right?"

"So far as we know. Go ahead."

John Moyama moved closer to the telephone and pushed his glasses up in place. "I spoke to you at the Friday conference about a little problem that might be developing here on the campus. A member of a different department. Some pressure. Do you remember? . . . . I believe I did not make much emphasis on it, but brought it up perhaps in some other connection—"

The major interrupted: "Check me on this if I'm wrong. Graves? Carl Graves? Physics?"

"Yes, that is the person."

"Thought so. I read up on him after the conference. He was on that Committee of Eleven thing about the loyalty oaths."

"Yes. He is upstairs in my apartment now."

"Not alone, I hope."

"No, no. My, no. Miss Elder is with him. She knows." Dr.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Moyama changed the receiver to his other ear, looking up and down the passageway as he did so.

"What d'you mean, 'she knows'? What does she know?"

"Ah? . . . . Why, I simply indicated to her that there was an amount of interest on the part of Dr. Graves. I was not particular with her, of course. After all, however, she is my intended."

The major was short. "Very well. Go ahead."

"I did think I should discuss this with you without waiting for tomorrow. In the event you had some feelings about it immediately."

Major Bales said, "Why's the man at your place?"

"For the same reason he came the other times. My article in the *Journal*."

"Damn that article. One way another, I've caught hell ever since it came out. Dj'you know it's already been reprinted in *Russian?* Every time Wright-Patterson gets on the phone I get some snotty remark about our thin security program. Stuff I'm held responsible for keeps popping up *everywhere*. You don't know it, Dr. Moyama, but you've went and rocked my career."

John Moyama pressed his lips together a moment in disgust, then said, "I am so sorry. We had no idea. I certainly did not."

The major said, "Well, okay. We can't anticipate everything, but why don't we try to anticipate *something* once in a while?" Farther from the telephone, he called in a loud voice, "Hey, hold it down out there! I can't hear a damn thing!" Back in intimacy, the major asked, "How long've you known him?"

The Japanese tapped his cheek with his fingertip. His hands were smooth and altogether hairless. "Ah. . . . More than three years. He is my very best friend in the university, a wonderful fellow."

"Sure, sure. Tell you what. I might just slip on over there. You all sober?"

"We have had a little, since Carl came, but we are sober."

"Swell. Swell business. Will he stay there?"

"I think so."

"All right. Here's what, now. I've got this little brunette with me, Nancy Adkins. She works in the admissions office over there. She says she knows you. Real straight-arrow, very much out of it, very dumb. We'll move on out, her and I, over to your place. It'll

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

be very natural. Like casual. I'll call you on your own phone from closer in, just to check on things there. When I call, just make out it's the first you've heard from me in a while, then we'll set up the drop-in."

"All right, sir," Dr. Moyama said. "I am sorry it is raining so hard."

"Damn, is it raining?"

"It started about an hour ago."

The major muttered, "This little broad'll have a fit. My top leaks. Never mind. It doesn't matter. It's all good window dressing. I'll call you."

"Good-by, then," Dr. Moyama said. Before leaving the light of the telephone booth, he wrote in his leather notebook:

October 11 *$0.20* *2 call Bales*

II

Earlier, before the rain began, in his white brick house off the campus, Carl Graves stood in the living room with his feet wide apart on the bright Persian rug, hunching and thinking and nibbling the corner of the October *Journal of Neurology*. His slender forefinger marked his place, an article he did not understand, on phantom nerve nets in living protein, by John Moyama, Ph. D. ("As disclosed by micromapping of isoelectric lines on the liver and other organs of the frog," said the abstract.)

Dr. Graves was wearing his new brown tweed suit. After trying all last winter, whenever he and his wife drove down to New York, to find what he wanted in Brooks' or Saks' or DePinna's, he had decided to have the suit made for him by the Chubb tailor in the village. In the city they had told him with some condescension that tweed had been out for five years, and *brown* tweed for twenty. Peaceably stubborn, he had asked the Chubb man to get swatches from Scotland, where tweed went on forever. Privately, in his study one night that July, he had reduced the forty large swatches to five choices ranging in color from burned brick to walnut. On the following day, without showing them to Ellen, he had eaten his small lunch in the village, then had taken the swatches into Chubb's.

Carl and the hairy-wristed, humorless tailor had spread the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

swatches on the muslined cutting table, and almost together had pointed to the same one, the color of light-roast coffee beans and marked with a bright blue pick-out thread. Then the tailor had put Carl in an easy chair with the heavy portfolio of British style plates. They showed tall, lion-headed men engaged in a variety of expensive, sedentary hobbies, most involving whiskey. The tailor had stood behind him grunting, "No. . . . No. . . . No. . . ." as Carl turned the stiff cards.

Then Carl had stopped. "There."

"Ah. Mmm. . . ." Chubb's tailor had said. The trousers were cut almost as scant as jodhpurs, with slash front pockets and flaps on the rear ones. Carl could even imagine elastic spat straps going under the insteps of his half-Wellingtons. The jacket suggested the old Norfolk style; there were box pleats at the shoulders and a drawing at the waist that indicated a belt. The tailor had laid a finger on the plate and said, "With six-inch cuffs you must take off the shoe to put on the trouser."

"That doesn't matter," Carl had said.

"Is good for you," the tailor had said. "Bulk you out some, you're so slender."

"Do we want these chamois patches on the elbows?"

The tailor had shaken his head. "Not for a while. Let the coat take its shape. One winter, two winters. Then we add the leathers."

The morning the tweed material arrived from Scotland, the tailor had called Dr. Graves at the university. Carl had taken lunch in the village that day, and had stopped in Chubb's to look at the cloth. The tailor had hefted the bolt out of the rack and tumbled it on the table.

"Awfully nice, *nice*," Carl had said. "But surely one suit couldn't take all that material, could it?"

The tailor had lowered his head in embarrassment and said, looking at the floor, "I got enough for two. One for me."

Carl, therefore, had left the shop feeling very high. Ellen would not mind the two hundred and fifty dollars. She had not minded the bright new Goulbenkian rug, fifteen feet by twenty-three, for over three thousand dollars, or the white brick house, snug in mature evergreen shrubbery, for twenty-seven thousand dollars, although the money was mostly hers.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Ellen had been sadly widowed at thirty-six; her first husband, Roger Hall, had been vice-president of a company making electronic measuring equipment, and Carl's superior. The widow's company stock and life insurance proceeds had allowed her, after she had married the clever engineer Carl Graves, to take him away from his humdrum, workaday designing of antennas and let him become a teaching fellow again, and take up the interrupted work on his doctorate, and ascend successfully to his orals.

(There had been a slight scuffle of minds at his orals—seniority and seasoned habit confronted a bold new topological approach—but Carl had detected this examiner's unhappiness promptly, and with footwork that made him tingle with joy to remember, he had subdued differences and expanded similarities until everyone around the great Harkness table felt he had just seen not thesis but synthesis. Only later could Carl laugh when his Quaker friend remarked that oral examinations are really not much use, but they do teach you to think on your knees.)

Now Carl's hair was grayer, and his pipe collection was larger, but he had kept his weight the same. He was a full professor with a trivial teaching load and a generous share of the physics department budget. Besides loving his wife with his original simple fervor, he still awarded her the interest and respect that go to the rich. Carl was observant of the lives around him, and knew by comparison of his with theirs that he was a lucky man, for he did much of what he liked and little of what he disliked. Prudently, he kept this knowledge before his eyes at all times, and rightly gave most of the credit to Ellen. She, for herself, had watched this thin and tousled genius in a white shop apron lose his fevers and soften into a thoughtful and gentle husband with a taste for the good things of life, and she heard of his achievements whenever the wind blew from the university. He was a rather heavy drinker when the day's work was done.

Now he stood in the living room, lightly, absently biting the corner of the October *Journal of Neurology* and looking deep into the Persian rug. Not moving, he called, "Ellen!" He heard her put something down in the kitchen and come to listen at the door. "Ellen, I think I'll go over to see John Moyama for a little while. But I'll be in early." As he expected, he now heard her coming down the hall to the living room.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

She stood in the doorway with her hands held behind her and her head tilted in her kind and familiar look of seeing into him deeper than he liked. She was plump and good-looking. "You've already been over there two nights this week, dear. Why not ask him over here for a change? Remember he isn't like you, sweetie. He knows when to go home and get some sleep."

"We just get carried away. . . . *I* get carried away. If he had a wife, then I expect I'd be just as polite."

"But *you* have a wife, home lonesome alone—"

Carl smiled and added for her amusement, "Sailing in the lowlands, lonesome alone, sailing in the lowlands low. . . ." These were the refrain words of a song they played and sang together from time to time; he muted his viola and she played the piano very softly so as not to over-music the sad and distant ballad. (Max Hayford, on Captiva Island, sang it against his guitar and taught it to Kent Curtis, who later taught it to Carl. The story was that Max had learned it from his Scottish governess as a boy, years before folk songs became the thing.)

"You," she said, smiling at him.

"I shall ask John here, then. But I thought you wanted to watch something on television tonight."

"I can watch upstairs."

"Okay," Carl said. He loved episodes of negotiation with his wife: reason 1 engaged with reason 2; reason illuminating pseudo-reason; prejudice or stubbornness (a moment's worth only) surrendering to sweet logic; occasionally, rarely, wild impulse and brave abandon trotting off hand in hand to folly (as the time when, with no water near, they bought a canoe); to Carl, this was the currency of a temperamentally sound marriage.

While he telephoned in the hall, Ellen made busy-work for her hands in the living room, and listened. He returned shaking his head. "It won't work. He has that girl of his over there, Ann Elder. They've just finished supper and she's doing his dishes. He says he can't leave under those circumstances. She wouldn't like to be left alone doing the dishes."

Ellen folded her solid arms and looked at him sideways and said, " 'For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven.' Among which, I believe, 'There is a time to keep silence and a time to speak.' Beginning of Ecclesiastes some-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

where. This is a time for me to keep silent and hope that it occurs to you just who is left alone with the dishes if you go over to John's apartment tonight."

Carl laughed and slapped the *Journal* with one hand. "Touché That's called paraleipsis, a passing over. As—" He tucked the *Journal* under his left arm and took an oratorical stance, right hand extended to an audience. "As: Friends, we did not come here to discuss this man's drunkenness or his infidelities. Rather, we are here to consider his appointment to the vestry. . . . And so forth. Mentioning by pretending to avoid mentioning. . . . I really won't be long, sweets. This is pretty important."

"I don't suppose you could do it during the normal working day."

"Afraid not. He and I are both so busy now."

"I wish you wouldn't go. I wish you'd stay home with me tonight."

"Now, Ellen, that isn't fair. I could be a soldier off somewhere, or an obstetrician, or an oil well driller, and you'd see a lot less of me."

"That persuades me not much."

"A man's work is his life."

"I don't nag you much, do I?"

"No, of course not. I'm grateful."

"Is this so important, between you and John?"

"Very. Very, very."

"Would I understand why?"

"Something here—," he held out the *Journal,* "—bears on my work with the saturation lens. I think."

"But you two are in entirely different departments. Unrelated fields."

Carl dropped into the chintz wing chair. "The farther I go as an almost independent worker, the more I come to believe that there are no such things as unrelated fields. In order to stay in what you know to be the main stream of your own work, you continually have to make side trips into the interior. Going sideways is a difficult way of going forward, but often it's the only way. Look, his—John's—neurology and biophysics apparently have taken him into micro-electrics. He appears to see something from where he's standing that I can't see from here. Hence—," Carl got

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

up quickly and went to the hall closet for his hat, "—hence I must go over to his apartment for a little while. Really, I won't be long."

Ellen said, "Take your umbrella. The man said rain."

He found his black silk umbrella with the burnt cane handle, and brandished it at her lovingly. "I'll be home before the first drop falls." He kissed her lightly and went out into the cold, still darkness.

He paused on the sidewalk in front of his house and hung the umbrella on a low branch of the bare maple tree by the steps. He left it swinging there and marched off with the fast and aggressive walk of a sedentary man out for exercise.

III

The walk to Plummer House, the dormitory where John Moyama lived, was eight blocks of quiet houses and root-heaved brick sidewalk and heavy old maples, naked and black in the cold, damp air. The upper limbs, like still and straining arms, lay black as fissures in the faint pink loom of the lights of the village on the far side of the campus, reflected by the dull underside of the cloud deck. The night was already quiet, as if the town had turned in to its own hearth in self-occupied forgetfulness.

As he stepped out briskly (but wary of the odd footing) he took up once more his secret striving toward serenity, an effort that his insight had not yet shown him he would not achieve through striving and effort. Lately, over the past several months, his private excitement in his work had grown to become an exhausting presence within him, like the constant company of a sleepless troop of revellers. To poise this way on the edge of grand achievement for so long—since the fifth of June, when the saturation lens positively worked for the first time—was very trying, the more so because he had never done it before. He had never approached so large a construct of his own mind, nor, as its unfortunate accompaniment, had he ever before been arrested so long by a kink in a twist in a turn of a problem.

The kind of reverie he forgave himself for, but fought with the energy of embarrassment, began when he was alone and engaged in some monotonous and pleasant activity like walking from his house to the campus. There came a voice, echoing and sonorous,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that slowly called a roll: *Galileo. . . . Kepler. . . . Newton. . . . Maxwell. . . . Faraday. . . . Fresnel. . . . Planck. . . . Einstein. . . . Millikan . . . . Fermi. . . . Carl Graves.* Carl would visibly twitch with modesty and the fright of exposure when the noble ghost came to his name.

Or, in an unsought secret dream, of the same genus, he knew, as all men's, but different species, he heard the thready voice of Joseph Marx, his first physics instructor. White-haired and crippled and nearly transparent with age, he whispered to his class: "As you know, gentlemen, the Michelson-Morley Experiment cannot be reproduced here because of the high cost of—," asthmatic pause, "—cost of the interferometer and other parts. The Graves Experiment, however, gives us all the evidence of the former as to the non-existence of the ether wind, and in addition, as you know—," another pause, "—as you know, it offers a simple yet elegant demonstration of electron mass increase with velocity." A stop to lick the thin dry lips. "You may be aware that I had the honor of being Carl Graves's first physics teacher. Thank you. Thank you. . . . There will be no more demonstrations of that sort in my laboratory."

To Carl, the danger of these innocent, joyful dreams lay in the exactness of the achievement they celebrated. One easy, floating leap, and the dreamer stood in happiness and comfort at the finish of the problem. So specific and graphic were the dream deeds—today's challenges triumphantly met with today's tools, today's methods, and eternity's magic, resulting in the exact hoped-for and predicted solutions—that he knew he risked being blinded to alternate conclusions that might appear as the real work went forward. The fear of missing something important, some subtle parcel of tendentious intelligence, some basic truth masquerading as a discontinuity of his data, kept him always tense. The reveries, which he teased himself about gently, inventing phrases like 'graduate-school Walter Mitty' and 'Tom Swift and his Atomic Vainglory,' were a waste of time, were risky in their seductions, and demonstrated soft places in his intellect. It was not amusing to consider his mind's being so poorly disciplined that it automatically fell to grazing whenever the reins were slacked. He found only dreary comfort in the likelihood that his mind was no worse than most.

He was puffing a little when he knocked on John Moyama's

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

door on the third floor of Plummer House. Ann Elder opened it almost at once. She was a friendly, plain girl, thin and dark-haired and very intelligent, who usually wore wrap-around skirts and large dangling earrings. Her upper right canine was missing; the gap showed when she smiled. "Come on in, Carl. Climb over the books. He's out on the floor quelling a riot or something. He'll be back in a minute."

Carl shook her hand in formal fondness and followed her into the crowded little apartment. He had known her for four years, since she was a senior, and he admired the way she managed her life. There was no doubt in his mind about the nature of her relationship with John Moyama, but, somewhat to his surprise, he did not regard it as unfitting or, of itself, doomed. (Carl was acutely conscious of his prudish tendencies and his comical language tic of dated expressions, panting with romantic direness, like 'abnormal connection' and 'illicit relationship,' and all the other inventions of the prurient Victorian journalists.) John Moyama, Carl knew, always took care to show the girl out of his apartment by one in the morning, and the university administrators, in return, ignored her well-known presence there every night until that hour. By custom, in comfort, she did his laundry with hers, and cooked their supper on his stove, and John dutifully took her to the chamber music concerts and all the other campus cultural events except the pacifist rallies, which, he said, made him nervous; their dull company-keeping seemed static to Carl, who was taken with American sadness at the sight of a stable relationship that had no blessed official standing.

This living room was small—no more than ten by fifteen feet—and was fitted with standard college furniture: Morris chair, pine-spindled reading lamp, a settle in the Morris style, with oak arms and dry, broke-leather cushions. The college-furnished bookcase was full, as were the casual shelves made of wandering one-by-eight spruce boards and glass bricks. Piles of books, some tied up with white twine, stood along the walls in the lee of furniture and in shadowed corners. The wooden furniture was beetle-dark and scaly with age. There was a small scarred desk (that Carl had never seen untidy) with a piece of blue use-fuzzed blotter on it, and on that a loose-leaf notebook and a china tray full of sharp yellow pencils of various lengths. (Oddly, John Moyama always

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

kept his little fold-up checkbook out in plain sight on the desk. Though many times presented the opportunity, Carl had not looked in it, nor would he ever. Carl regarded this habit of John's as an Oriental error of taste, one he would not compound by mentioning.) In all other respects, the room was bare of personal ornament.

Gesturing aimlessly with the issue of the *Journal,* Carl said, "I hope I'm not intruding, Ann."

"Not a bit. You're getting to be one of the family. Go sit down and read something while I finish the dishes. That's a pretty suit."

Carl sat in the Morris chair she pointed to with her wet cigarette, and carefully crossed his brown tweed legs. He opened the *Journal.* From the small kitchen that glared white with enamel and fluorescent tubes, Ann continued, "I think John is in a phase with this book thing."

Carl leaned back and closed the *Journal.* She was going to talk. "What book thing now?"

Ann leaned into the doorway and squinted to see him. "Well, *you* know. A year or so ago, when his university check would come, he'd get a money order for his mother and write a check for the Union bill, and get cash for the rest of the month. Then he'd do all the subtraction and come down to the end of the column, the balance remaining, and go down to the bookstore and spend it all. Fifty, a hundred dollars a crack. He doesn't do that any more. He buys government savings bonds. This government." Ann returned to the sink.

Carl smiled. "Seems to me that his only book problem is shelf space. But he probably just decided he had enough books. When I was his age and poor I did the same thing. Books were security. They were the real walls that kept out the weather. Books were the friends that said hello to you when you got back to the room. . . . They never wore out or had to be greased at the gas station, or had to have their tonsils out. Up to some point. Perhaps when you get a room with all the walls covered with books, you slow up somewhat. After all, there are just a few books worth owning, not so?"

From the kitchen, Ann asked, "How do you know you have 'em all?"

Then the oak door into the men's dormitory opened and John

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Moyama came in. He closed it softly and leaned against it and took off his glasses and polished them. He wore a white shirt and no tie. He smiled at Carl. "Dr. Graves?"

"Dr. Moyama, I believe."

"Well, another crisis has been got past." He sat lightly on the arm of the couch. "We have on this floor a nice fellow from down in the country who does not wash himself very often. From time to time, when he begins to smell at some distance, his friends push him in the shower and lather him with bristle brushes. He screams while they scrub. The difficulty is that he is a Negro. Each of the other nine Negroes in school has asked him to wash oftener because of the public image matter. If he smells, they say, soon by extension they all smell. But he forgets from one time to the next, so the problem repeats." John Moyama put his black-rimmed glasses on again and adjusted them carefully, then smiled at Carl and Ann. "The men on the floor here have reached a really authentic American solution, to wit: Whenever the time comes to give this fellow a bath, the message goes out on the campus. In a little while one or two of the other Negro students appears here on the floor to help with the job. Committee action with great foresight. No one can add racial motives to the affair afterward."

Carl asked, "What do you do about this?"

John lighted a cigarette, then waved the lighted match in broad, slow arcs—a mannerism of his that always arrested Carl's attention—until the flame dwindled to a puny dim dot cowering on the lee side of the match; at length it went out and trailed smoke. "Nothing. As I understand it, my job is to keep down the size of the crowd. All I must do is stand outside the bathroom door and maintain earnest discussions with one or other of the students. This prevents the accumulation of an audience."

"It probably gives the whole proceeding a quasi-official atmosphere, too," Carl said.

Ann said, from the kitchen, "I'll be glad to stand outside the bathroom door. That would reduce the crowd to zero."

Carl turned the reading lamp up another step. "John, isn't this vigilante justice?"

John took his seat at the end of the couch in the following manner: He backed to the couch and put one hand on the arm and the other on the oak top rail of the back, then rocked backward until

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

his whole weight was on his hands. Smoothly, with impassive face, he lifted his legs into the tailor's position, crossed, then lowered himself to the cushion. He shook his head. "I am sorry, you must English me that word. Vigilante."

"Vigilante. Justice by vigilance committee. Trial, sentence, and execution by amateurs. Unofficial legalistics."

"Of course," John said. He drew on his cigarette. "Consider that the university is established for mature young men and women. Not for bed-wetters and people who will not bathe. The university is above problems of this kind, and has no machinery for dealing with them. By allowing such a thing as the bathing to go on, I am just being, so to say, an extension of the intention of the university. I am not subverting the university, I am enlarging it."

Carl looked at the ceiling and thought how well John spoke, for a foreigner. He said, "That's what all vigilantes believe, you know."

John smiled a little. "Carl, that is called the *ad hoc euchre*. You first tell a person that he belongs to a class, *X*, of people. Then tell him that all people in *Class X* share one trait, an inability to think logically about *Class X*. Then, when he tumbles into your trap and cries, 'That is not so!', all you have to do is say, 'See?' So I excuse myself, and ask if you couldn't use a drink."

"I thought you'd never ask. See if you have any of that Scotch left that goes so well with the native water. I'll be much obliged."

Ann came out of the kitchen while John made three drinks; there was not room for two in the kitchen at once. Ann said, "John, tell Carl what you heard about this morning."

John laughed and said, "Yes. Just a minute." He came back to the living room carrying the three drinks clustered before him. He passed them, then sat as before on the couch. "This morning I learned that my nickname here on the floor and in my classes is *Divine Wind*."

Carl stirred at once. "Really! How the hell did that start?"

John said, "I do not know. You and Miss Ann here are the only ones I have ever discussed that matter with. Neither of you would have passed it on. I think it most probable that this is coincidence. Some clever student got the phrase from a history book—how odd to know that one has participated in recorded history!—and attached it to me only on grounds of my Japaneseness."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Carl did not like this, and was angry on behalf of his friend. "How'd you come to find out?"

"One of my graduate students told me, without malice. I am a mystery man to them, and this is the way they deal with mystery: put a name to it. I am not disturbed, exactly, but I am amused at the coincidence, and, naturally, I do wonder what they would say if they knew."

Carl pulled his lip. "I judge your standing would go up. You'd be even more of a mystery man. You'd probably have to tell the story every fall to each of your classes. We all still love adventure stories." Carl was holding the gray *Journal* on his knee, still marking his place with his finger, holding it obviously, hoping John would notice. He sipped his drink.

John looked up. "I did nothing adventurous. I never flew a loaded mission. . . . The luck of it all still impresses me from time to time. If President Truman had delayed one week more in approving the first Bomb drop, I would be dead now. Dead at sixteen years old. The Bomb saved my life. I should write the President my thanks. I had just been given my third class Imperial Army Aviator's certificate, meaning I had had, I remember, five hours of dual instruction, and had soloed. I could get the plane up and go around the field and land it, and very little else. I had even been assigned my final plane. A tired old Zero loaded with six hundred pounds of sand to practice with. I think I told you I was a mechanic apprentice while I was learning to fly. We worked two shifts a day—about sixteen hours—and took flight instruction in our spare time." John shook his head slowly. "Even today, I can still fall asleep on command. . . . All of us in the mechanic corps worked at finding ways to lighten the planes so as to allow a larger cargo of explosives. They would let us do almost anything except reduce the reserve fuel. They insisted we have at least twenty minutes to dodge about at the target. Even at the leanest cruise settings, that meant, in the Zero, ten gallons of gasoline. Sixty pounds. But we removed radios and guns and storage batteries and generators and most of the instruments."

"How could you get where you were going without instruments?" Carl asked this trivial logical question because he had, at the moment, no language to ask the large logical question.

"There was always a leader goose or two in each sortie that kept their instruments. . . . It was my idea—remember, I was only six-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

teen—to loosen the landing gear in such a way that the plane would fly off it and leave it behind on the runway. We never did it. They thought it was too dangerous. You see, they could not risk putting a big hole in the runway if something should go wrong. And anyhow, the drag of the open wheel wells would have slowed the planes so much that they would have had to carry extra fuel, so you have lost what you gained.

"But, starting where I left off, one of the boys, a little genius, calculated that each of his legs weighed thirty pounds, and petitioned our squadron commander to let him go to the clinic and have them amputated. His request was refused, chiefly because there was no spare surgical time, but also because it was an entirely new idea, and would have had to be processed all the way to the top and back down again."

"Ah," Ann said, an involuntary sound.

John continued, "The boy considered doing it himself, or having one of us do it, but that came to nothing. He was afraid he would die too soon, or fly badly because of the pain, and thereby spoil everything."

Carl uncrossed his legs and recrossed them the other way. John's ease in talking reasonably about his own former madness disturbed him, just as it disturbed him to watch a self-confident blind man go careering down the sidewalk with nothing but a white cane for eyes. He was urged to take John's hand as he would a child's and point with it and say, "This is sane and this is mad. *This* is sane and *this* is mad," as if John had kept all his considerable faculties but his discrimination. Carl said, "I wonder where that boy is now?"

John Moyama laced his hands behind his head and watched the smoke rise from the cigarette in his mouth, smiling. "My mother wrote once saying he is now a bookkeeper in one of the Matsushita companies. I think he also should write President Truman."

A reflective silence unfolded in the room as each went his own way, then Carl said, twisting in the chair, "You understand that I have no way of knowing where good taste ends and bad taste begins in this matter. I don't know where you're sensitive."

"Nowhere. Do not feel restrained. I myself learn something every time I review it." John waved his hand languidly.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Well, did you really feel, while you were getting ready for this, that you were actually going to fly that plane right through a gateway into Glory?"

"With most of my feeling I felt that. But there was a kind of background feeling, my occidental—," John picked in the air for a word, "—occidental *ethos* that said this was all a pageant or drama we were sharing, and soon the lights over the audience would go on again. . . . Yet. . . . We loved each other so! We were very *happy!*"

"Then, looking back on yourself as you were, do you think you'd have . . . completed your flight?"

"Certainly, one way or another. The casualty rate—," he laughed drily, "—I mean, rather, the *failure* rate among the Kamikaze (or the Tokko Tai, which was my group) was terribly high. This was partly, of course, because we were poor pilots, and could not manage the planes. But I believe that a large part of our problem was a form of hysterical excitement that stressed the glorious dying instead of the successful completion of a trajectory. After the war, reports said that many of the planes simply dived into the water." John, evidently entangled in visions, held out one hand flat, palm up, and dived the other into it from considerable altitude. "You must remember that we were all very young." John's eyes were bright and he seemed a little breathless.

Ann said, "I think that's enough. Carl doesn't want to hear any more."

John sat up. "What?"

Ann said, "We don't want to hear any more. We've heard all we need to, all we can absorb, thank you. It was all so long ago—I was three years old—and it was in another country, and you were another person, and—" She found both Carl and John looking at her, and stopped.

John said kindly, "Now, I am sorry, Ann. I see I went all around my point without touching it. So. I discovered during the Occupation that in spite of my heritage and all the training, my mind was nevertheless occidental. I found I liked leisure and space to move in and the pleasures of the flesh. I watched the Americans. I got close to them. I admired them and worked for them, to my mother's shame, and learned English. I was strong with a further piece of insight. I knew, after the flying and the be-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lieving and the hysteria and the—er—love among us, that I was to be a team man forever. I believe in the team. First, the team."

Carl showed John the *Journal*. "Did a team write this? Could a team ever wander off exploring like this?"

John shook his head, smiling. "I am explaining poorly tonight. Permit me to redouble your drink." He continued from the kitchen: "Individuals will always do the publishing. Team-minded individuals do better publishing."

"Ouch," Carl said.

"Naturally, I do not mean an individual who tries to become an indicator of average team opinion. The team mind can perfectly well work alone." He crashed glasses and ice. "Here, now. The team mind looks at the world around it and makes its motives and value-judgments harmonious with the real world. Harmonious."

"John, what is the opposite of the team mind?"

"Neurotic."

"Oh, my," Carl said in a low voice. "All right, what is neurotic? There are so many meanings. What's your investiture of the word?"

John returned with the highballs, walking with slow poise to avoid spilling any. "This is getting thick. Tell me what is 'investiture'?"

Carl took his drink. "I do a new word on you? Rare privilege, young man. Investiture is a kind of jargon term from general semantics—" Mockingly, he raised his hands to shield his head. "—It is *not* a cult. It *looks* like a cult and it *sounds* like a cult, but it *thinks* like the middle class. Investiture is the moral bias or prejudicial weight of a word. It's the shroud of added meaning you cover a word with, its aura. How are you using 'neurotic'?"

"I use it to mean non-team." John smiled broadly and bowed in his chair. "Observe how I step around all your deadfalls. You should feel ashamed to tease the foreigner. . . . The team mind, or personality, if you prefer, wastes no time in rebellion, in revolution. So. The neurotic mind is preoccupied with its own differences from the minds around it. So. The vigorous neurotic forces his environment into conformity with himself. So. The feeble neurotic is a vegetable. So. The team mind swims in its otherness, its teamness. It loses itself. It is unself-conscious. Carried to heights of personal heedlessness, it is Christ."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Oh my God," Ann said. "No pun intended."

Periodically Carl was amazed at the fluency of this man whose entire education had been pursued in a foreign language. Nevertheless, his rising impatience now rudely forced a turn of topic; he held out the *Journal*. "Let me ask you just one thing," he said.

John Moyama's thin eyebrows moved. "Are you still carrying that poor bit around? It was nothing but a little commentary kind of thing. An oddity observed."

"I'm not interested in your work, I don't care about your work, I'm talking about your equipment. No, no, that sounds terrible. I *am* interested in your work, of course, personally, because it's yours, you know. But I am thinking about your gear. You indicate here in several places—I have them underlined—that you're measuring very small voltage differences, plotting around on the surface of an animal's organ."

"Also, sometimes, inside the organ," John said.

"Oh, my. All right, then, you've somehow got around the problem of altering the measured dimension by the act of mensuration. Haven't you?"

"Well," John said, "in a way."

"*That's* the trick! Now, you don't have any real whizzer electronics men with you, do you? That's what you said once."

"No, I don't."

"I mean, your gear is pretty simple, isn't it?"

"Oh, yes." John looked at the opposite wall.

"Well, then, how d'you *do* it?" Carl Graves jumped up and paced the room twice, quickly, then came to stand before John with his legs planted apart. In his tight-legged trousers, he had the back-knee-bent look of a Cruikshank illustration for Dickens. A lock of gray hair fell over his forehead. He chinked his highball glass against his front teeth.

John Moyama did not look up at him, but asked, "Do you not do the games and puzzles they print in the back of *Scientific American*?"

Carl stammered for a moment, spun off by this wild change of matter and manner. "Ah, ah. If I have time. Ah, for me usually, the results aren't worth the mental strain to get there."

"Did you see the one about learning how to mow your lawn?"

"About what, what? Learning to mow your lawn? No, I guess I missed it."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

John paused and leaned back and sipped his drink slowly, prelusively. Carl exhaled, then returned to his chair and sat; he stuck out his thin legs and rocked his heels oppositely to and fro to tap the edges of his boot soles together. John said, "Naturally, the article did not begin with a discussion of mowing the lawn. The piece was about programming a digital computer with coördinate information—for instance, the abscissa and ordinate of a number of points on the perimeter of an irregular, enclosed, flat shape, to find the area within. The point was that the computer, being primitive but quick, can deal with a shape defined that way, while a man, being sophisticated but slow, does not have time. He has to use algebra.

"As one of those cute practical illustrations, the article considered the shape of a lawn, to be defined by the plan coördinates of its edges. The goal in mowing a lawn is to pass over the whole area of the lawn once and once only. Whenever you mow over a place you have been before, you lose points. Because your mower has a minimum turning radius and a finite swath width, you can easily see that there is only one shape you can cut with complete happiness: a spiral derivative with a hole in the middle. A braided rug with a hole at each focus. The race track oval is almost as efficient. Everything degrades from there, but for every lawn there is only one best way to cut it.

"Ah, the little article caused all manner of reaction among the readers! The fellows sent in scale drawings of their lawns, showing obstacles like trees, and, some added a dimension of time: night, meal hours, school schedules, and even hours of worship in churches nearby, that all prevented mowing. They asked for individual solutions; evidently they were disturbed by the chance that they were mowing harder than necessary." John was spinning his story out, talking slowly and enunciating clearly enough for the dullest note-taker. "Finally, the editors admitted that the difference in efficiency between the poorest mowing and the very best mowing for a given space was only ten percent or so, and that a man working only with intuition will almost equal the computer's performance after two tries." John smiled at Carl and added with soft cruelty, "I do not have a lawn."

Carl stood again. "I have a little one, but I never think about it. They waste a lot of time on trivia, it seems to me, those *Scientific*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

American people. It's interesting enough. But how does it relate to your measuring means? I don't see it."

"It does not relate, Carl."

"What?"

"It does not. How is your drink?"

"Oh. Just a little. A light one."

"Me too, remember me?" Ann said, yawning.

"Really, now," Carl said, raising his voice to reach the kitchen, "tell me about the equipment you're using. Is it commercial, or did you build it yourselves?"

"We built it," John said, "which is rather why I cannot discuss it." He returned with fresh drinks.

Carl tasted his and said, "Man, you really hit this one."

"My thumb slipped."

Carl had observed long before that John Moyama poured whiskey the way a barber runs shampoo into a man's hair, with his thumb over the hole, thus entitling him to thumb-licking privileges. John had demonstrated the accurate control of quantity he got that way. Now Carl said, "What do you mean, you can't discuss it?" He believed John was teasing him in some pointless way he found amusing.

John tucked up his small feet. "Carl, I tried the other day to explain it to you. The work is a very subsidiary little program under the University's general schedule of studies financed by the Air Force. There is really nothing very top secret about it. I think the formal classification is 'Restricted,' which usually means that anybody can see whatever he wants. This is more a matter of good *manners* than anything else, you know; you have worked for the military before. As a matter of courtesy you submit everything you want to publish, for reading and review first. You must remember, they are paying all the bills. And, once in a hundred times you get shut off, censored. The rest of the time, your paper comes back approved. What kind of cigarettes are you smoking? Ah, those are too strong for me. Ann, what do you have? None?" At the window, John pulled aside the drapery, then he went to the shallow, crammed closet and found his heavy black rubber rain cape. "There is a vending machine in the cellar of Houghton. I shall be only a minute, excuse me." He tipped his open coin purse into the strong light from the kitchen to see into it, then left by the stairwell door.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Alone with Ann now, Carl scratched his ear and thought of something to say.

She broke the silence herself: "Sorry, Carl, he really means it."

"What?"

"He's like iron. I love him so. But he's so hard. He doesn't even *feel* all the rules that tie him up. None of that matters. He doesn't mind any more than a train minds following rails."

Carl was startled at her sudden self-revelation; she had never before spoken to him so directly. He moved quickly to keep the moment. "He loves you, doesn't he?"

"How would you know, with somebody like that? The door is always unlocked, that's how I know. I guess if I came up here after work some evening and found the door locked, then I'd know I was out. That's the only way he'd ever tell me." She passed her hand over her face, looking at the floor, then shook her head until her earrings jingled. "Anyhow, he won't tell you whatever it is you want to know. I promise you that."

"Well, that's his privilege, of course. But we're old friends. Very old. We have a relationship. I believe I've known him longer than you have. He'll tell me when it suits him to, when the stars are right, or something." He swallowed some of his drink. "He knows me. He knows I'd never compromise him."

"No one will. No one could. For fun, just remember what I said." She stood wearily, with a little grunt, and went into the kitchen. "I guess these dishes won't put themselves away."

Carl sat motionless for a time, slumped low in the chair, looking at the shiny toes of his half-Wellingtons, hearing her talk over again in his mind's ear, picking out the motes of hostility that applied to him. He had noticed other times before that women seemed more vulnerable to jealousy over a man's men friends or a man's profession than ever over a man's sexual commas. American women, anyway. He found an old issue of *The New Yorker* and quickly floated into its otherworld of metallic and facile intimacy, glassy and loveless, and stiffer than real formality.

Quietly, John Moyama came in with wet shoes and trouser legs, wiping his glasses with his handkerchief. Ann said, "Leave your cape outside."

John smiled and said, "It is already hung on the rail to dry. Can you ever be as good a wife as you are already a mother?"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Ann blushed scarlet and made a spitting sound at him.

Carl laid aside the magazine and said, "So anyhow, resuming, suppose you tell me all about this academic censorship of yours."

John Moyama lighted a cigarette from the new package, not taking the time to wave the match slowly into smoking extinction; now he shook it with peevish quickness, though his expression was serene. "Those are hard words, friend, but I will tell you what I know. It is my understanding that in general we are not trying particularly to withhold facts and data, so much, as we are our intentions and our rate of progress. From a competitive viewpoint, those are much more important. Little papers of mine have been postponed or dropped only because my superiors did not want to suggest out loud that we were interested in certain areas. Carl, the particular matter you seem to be interested in has been cut off. You see, after you first asked about it the other day, I wrote you a letter, with sketches, detailing the different gear. I did, sir. I checked with my contract officer before I mailed it. He cleared it offhand, then within fifteen minutes he called back and said no, no, no. What could I do? I put the letter in the supervised trash and called it an hour and a half wasted."

"You put the letter in what?"

"In the supervised trash. I have to empty all the receptacles myself, and burn the refuse."

"Well, I'll be damned." Carl pulled at his nose. "Did he give you any reason?"

"No. I can guess for you, though. I guess that something in our petty little work happened by coincidence to parallel something else of theirs in another program. A more sensitive program."

"Sensitive program! *Damn* what the military have done to the English language! Well. . . . All right now, listen, John. Answer me this. Did you discover any fundamental novelty when you built this whatever-it-is gear?"

John took off his glasses and sucked one temple bar while he squinted across the room at the piles of books. "Please, Carl. I know it is unreasonable, but I get very nervous talking about this. No, I don't believe there is any novelty. Surely, nothing in it would be new to someone like you, current in the art."

"And I could go down the same road you did and arrive at the same result?"

"No doubt."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Then why can't we assume I did? Time is what I have least of. You could save me time, time, time. Hell, the only thing that appeals to me about your technique is the probe. None of the rest is applicable, very likely."

"Very likely not."

"I mean, it'll probably come down to doing it with iron filings or something simple like that. But I really ought to have a look at that probe." Carl was up again and walking. "I get the feeling from your piece here that you're working down around three hundred megacycles. Right?" John Moyama did not move. "On the other hand, we're up around five hundred. Considerable difference."

The telephone on the desk whirred softly. With the speed of flowing water, John was up and answered it before it finished the second ring. "Hello, Moyama." He listened for a time with an increasing small smile, then said, "All right, all right. Fine. Goodby."

"Was that my wife?" Carl asked.

"No, no. It was one of my Air Force friends, ah, somewhat out on the town. He is bringing his date here for a nightcap. My, it is lucky no one has to work tomorrow! Ann, do you know a Nancy Adkins, from the admissions office?"

"Oh, her," Ann said sleepily.

Carl Graves went to the window and looked out at the glistening gravel walks of the quadrangle. "I think I'll be going on now. Ellen will be wondering."

John said, "It may not seem so, but it is raining a great deal outside. Wait a little."

"Would you lend me your cape?"

"Of course. But that will not keep your pretty trousers dry."

Carl suddenly smoothed the skirts of his jacket with both hands and went to sit in the Morris chair. "I'll slip along when it lets up a little. I need to get outdoors. . . . I don't understand your attitude, John, I really don't. What's happened? We used to help each other. Propose and defend and argue. Present cases and advance logic. Now it's all gone to chit-chat."

John lifted his hand for peace. "Please, Carl. I was not deep in a government activity then. . . ." He looked steadily at Carl, then asked softly, "Could you ever accept that there are forces or

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

powers or governments greater than you or I or us together? Is that completely out of the question?"

Carl stared at the floor over his tightly-clasped hands. "Of course not. I accept it on any reasonable level you can identify. Of *course* we are just specks. Of *course* we are insignificant beside the government organism, the monster. But I can't believe it inside. *I* walk in free air, John. I just can't see how you work in that environment."

Slowly and kindly, as if weighting the awful words with love to ease their aggression, John said, "It does not bother me, Carl. . . . Because I concentrate on my work instead of my environment."

Carl flinched, and gave a small, real cry. "*That's* the terrible pity of it, man! That's the way the V-2 rocket men thought. And our own nuclear mechanics after the squash court part. And the German army doctors who killed Jews without malice, for educational purposes, studying the limits of human endurance—up to the limits and then just a little beyond."

John said, "Carl, you talk like a very young man, like a boy. The first shock of adolescent vision, of the first sight of the real machinery of the real world, how it really works. You see evil in recruitment and espousement and the immersion of the personal will in the community will. I think what you fear is commitment. Watch. Let me put on my hideous rubber mask, now, for you." John made the motions of drawing something down over his head. "I am now Japanese twenty years ago. I know that the white men of the western world are imperialist profiteers raping the Orient for raw materials, all criminals. Our attack on Pearl Harbor is not treachery; it is a brave and decisive maneuver of a little nation that knows it is strangling—blockaded, boycotted, embargoed on all sides. It is a master stroke at evening the odds in the first battle of an—inevitable war. Now I take off my disguise." John pushed his fingertips up his temples. "Look, I am an American. Those yellow devils. Day of Infamy. Dastardly ambush. *Et* cetera. *And* so forth. You know it all. But, Carl, Japanese or American, I do my entire and unreserved best to help win the war. I do not criticize the motives of my superiors. I have the citizen personality. And you?" John Moyama was standing by now, swaying a little in the middle of the cluttered room, a short, slight Japanese speaking in a rapid, impassioned monotone.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Carl said, "I suppose I am a bad citizen. But I am a free man, reasonably."

"Ah, reasonably. The sweet name of reason. Almost as much crime hides under the name of reason as under religion. You ought to trust prejudice, not reason." Abruptly, as if drawn up on a leash, John changed his mood and his subject. "Now, let me take my turn at inquisitiveness. Why does this micromapping business interest you?"

Lost in an ugly reverie, Carl was a moment replying. "Oh. That. I can't go into any detail yet; it would be premature." Carl stopped, surprised, when John began laughing softly. "I don't mean it's *secret!* I haven't got the math straight, is all. But all right, very well. Essentially, it's a further simplification and combination of two of our major field theories. I'm almost sure I can prove that space, or ether, whichever, is saturable. You want to hear this? All right: What I find is that there is an asymptotic limit to the wave energy passable in unit area. . . . It's—it's the biggest thing I've ever met. I can hardly breathe." Carl squeezed his thin hands together. "John, I've made an electrostatic lens that refracts light. I think it does. I know it does. But it has a focal length of about five miles. Hard to measure. Measuring is the problem. Measuring is always the problem. . . . Weigh an elephant at noon. Then weigh him again, at one minute past noon. How much weight did he lose, in water vapor and carbon, when he exhaled just then? Ahh!" Carl held one fist in the other palm, and trembled. "John, I think I can focus a laser!"

There was stamping and giggling on the stairs outside, and Ann opened the door. A wet and cheerful couple came in with much noise: the beautiful girl Carl had seen in the university office, and a short, bull-necked young Air Force major with blond hair cut so short it looked shaved. Carl stood dumb in the middle of the room, still spinning with his own matters, hurt beyond feeling that John Moyama had offered no comment at all on the lens, not even the sort of "How-wonderful-let-us-talk-about-it-later," remark he might rightly have expected. He wished he were at home in the quiet, where Ellen was. He wished he had not been so willful and childish as to leave his umbrella hanging in a tree.

Shaking hands with Nancy Adkins and Major Bales, Carl noted that both looked considerably elevated with drink, and wondered

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

if he did also. Major Bales shook hands hard *(Please understand how strong I am.),* and Carl returned his smile fixedly, determined not to show a wince.

John Moyama brought drinks for the new people at once. When everyone was seated, there was no unoccupied place in the living room. The trivial talk that rose and fell and rolled about the room in clotted amiability made Carl sleepy at once. Evidently these people were friends at a very low level of intellectual tension; the talk never went much above personalities, drinking ability, the weather, and surrealistic dirty jokes. Because Carl had nothing to add to this sort of congress, because he was habitually uneasy in this, the commonest kind of social encounter, his established pattern was to swing from a sulky, critical silence into badly-phrased, over brainy wit that always missed, then back, scuttling for cover in the general silence. He had always been annoyed by his internal contrast: How quickly and well he thought; how ponderously he announced trivia. He was sadly aware of a weakness he assumed was American: the inability to relax and let others better suited to the work make the light talk. He crossed his legs. He laughed with a short bark. He uncrossed his legs. He slumped in the Morris chair and rammed his hands into his waistband. He watched John Moyama; it was an ugly surprise to see the ease with which John joined the cub tumbling. He even told a mild Japanese dirty joke.

Within half an hour, Carl lost all hope of having further private dialogue with John Moyama tonight. The major and the girl were settled in snugly, and their visit already seemed endless. Carl thought glumly of the time he had squandered this evening. He rose to his feet at a lull-and-switch in the small talk. "Now I'll take you up on the offer of that cape," he said to John. The window was black and streaming with rain.

"Hey, where you off to?" the major cried.

Carl smiled with false wistfulness. "Have to hike on home. Promised my wife I'd be home before it rained. One more promise on the trash pile, eh?" There was general movement and talk, and suddenly, without knowing how, Carl found himself backed up against a pile of books, struggling to keep his balance and not fall over them, because the young major had taken up a forcing position before him, putting out his smooth, fair face, blue eyes

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

blinking. "Listen here, Chief," Major Bales said, "You'll drownd out there. You're on foot?"

Carl nodded, wearing his fixed half-smile, tense lest the major touch him. Unseen, he wiped his hands on his trousers behind his thighs.

Major Bales said, "Well, hell, *that* won't do. We'll go in my car."

The major's date, Nancy Adkins, turned her dark wide eyes on Carl and drawled, "Better sit in back. It's drippy up front."

Carl said to Major Bales, "No, no. I wouldn't think of it. It's just a few blocks." Even as he said this, he trailed off into a mumble of acceptance, for the major was an oddly forceful man.

At the door to the stairway, John Moyama said, "I am a little sentimental about that cape. Put it on and we see how you look. There. The catch at the neck. Ha, what a surprise! You look exactly like an English policeman without his helmet. How does it feel to be inside?"

"It's just a little small for a perfect fit." Then he spoke only to John Moyama, as though no one else were within hearing and his naked mind were free to turn in the white light of honest inquiry. "Possessions that follow you for a long time get to be some way mystical, don't you think? I have an odd jacket at home that I still wear sometimes, that I was wearing fifteen years ago one night on a little ship going to Alaska. There was a lifeboat drill, and afterward, when I was getting out of the life preserver, one of the left sleeve buttons got caught and pulled off. It bounced on the deck and then overboard. I saw it go. It was tortoise shell, and I couldn't match it exactly when I got back to the States. When I look at the sleeve now, I think each time, how remarkable it is that a button I once wore is now at the bottom of the North Pacific somewhere, and has been since before I met my wife. My marriage, and everything since I was a junior antenna engineer, postdates the button, yet nevertheless, if you knew where to look, you would find the button more or less as was." Carl stood in the doorway in the slightly wet rain cape, entirely unaware of the major standing behind him, talking only to John. The major looked up at the ceiling of the hall in visible boredom. John Moyama, however, listened with an acceptant and tranquil expression, awarding Carl the courtesy that one trained mind commonly

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

shows another, acknowledging the often grand intelligence hidden in the trivial. Carl went on slowly, picking his way across rough country: "Now I am wearing my enemy's cape. It was made in a nation that wanted me dead, which worked for that purpose. It is an instrument of war, like any article of matériel. Halfway around the world it was worn twenty years ago by a man whose main purpose in life was to kill me. And now here he is, my friend before me, and I am wearing his cape. As your Ann says, that was in another country, and you were a different person. Yet your cape is the same. My button is probably the same. Sometimes I think that material things are steadier and more constant than either we or our ideas."

John Moyama, holding the door, smiled and laid his head against the jamb. "Carl, does it make a difference? Sometimes you forget our first rule: Ignore all differences that make no difference. Anyone who thinks can pass his time turning over stones. Under every stone is a mystery we cannot solve. If you only consider mysteries, you become paralyzed, or anesthetic. Or a mystic. Please do anything, but do not become a mystic. Good night." John opened the door wide so that Carl could say his formal good nights to Ann and Nancy, who had already drifted together in the corner like floating chips obeying surface tension, and were talking quietly. They looked up and smiled and nodded. Carl followed Major Bales down the stairs, holding his *Journal* under the cape.

IV

They ran through the rain to Bales's big convertible, and sat inside in the musty smell of wet upholstery and mildew, arranging themselves and puffing. Carl sat on the cape, and covered his left knee with a corner of it where the major showed him a drip fell. The windows soon fogged inside with the moisture of their bodies. Carl said, "This is certainly wonderful of you. My suit would have been ruined."

"A pleasure. How do I go?"

"Turn right at the first street, up there by the light, then just eight blocks straight on."

"Roger," the major said. He took a rag, an entire khaki shirt, soft and torn, still with its buttons, and mopped the inside of the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

windshield clear. The buttons clicked on the window frame and the dash deck. "That's some better." He started the engine inexpertly, letting it race wildly for several seconds after it caught. Beginning with a slight lurch, he steered off down the street.

In a moment, Carl sat straight and said, "That was the turn right there." He was too late.

"Well doggone," the major said, driving on without looking back. "We'll just go around." He turned at the next side street and drove several dark blocks in silence. The wipers clattered loosely. The major hunched forward over the wheel, peering ahead.

Carl gestured with his hand. "Now, if you'll just go right again at the next street." The major nodded elaborately, but instead of turning at the indicated street, he accelerated roughly past it. Carl's immediate reactive assumption was that the man was hard of hearing. He raised his voice and spoke with particular care: "Take any right along here, then go over two blocks and go right again. We've already passed it." He swam his slender white hand in the air along imaginary miniature streets, making neat turns and slow straights to show this obtuse man, slightly drunk, the way he should go. Major Bales did not see, or ignored, the movements of Carl's hand, and squinted into the rain. Carl let his hand fall, and looked out into the moving darkness. He was now a little afraid.

In a moment the major turned and grinned at Carl with smug and knowing intimacy and said, "Okay, now. Tell you what. Let's us just drive around a while and talk, okay?"

Carl thought: O God, he's a homosexual. A fairy. What do I do now? He said, "I'd just as soon go on home, if you don't mind."

"Sure, pretty soon, pretty soon. But let's drive around a little while first."

"Really, I—I haven't been feeling terribly well. The flu or something. If you don't mind—"

"Oh, but I do mind," the major said. "We'll drive for a while. I get hauled out on a night like this, bust up a good head start with that little Nancy proposition, so I do mind." The major was talking as much to himself as to Carl. "You can understand that. I always finish my chores, see? That's the way to be. So let's make it simple and straight, then we'll all go home, okay?"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Now Carl was sure the man was criminal or mad. Moving slowly so as not to be noticed, he edged away on the seat. There flashed beside the road a white wooden *X* sign; they were leaving the village on the road that paralleled the railroad tracks. "I'm sorry," Carl said. "I don't know what you're—"

"Look, you're wasting our time."

"What, what?" The road now led through a raw cut in a stone ridge; a tumbling, moving sheet of black water covered the granite wall. "What do you *want?*" Carl asked. He was annoyed at the little tremor in his voice.

"Only a little chat is all. We're gonna have us a little simple talk. I've got some theories, see, about first one thing another, and I thought we'd talk 'em over. And, hell, it's a nice ride. It isn't all that late."

Carl sat straighter and raised his voice a little to be heard over the clatter of the wipers. "I'm trying to keep my temper, Major. If you'll just turn around and take me home. Remember, I didn't want to bother you in the first place. My wife will be very concerned." Carl's impulse was to reach out and shake that blond bullet head until some effect was seen, some result produced, and the major noticed him in his distress.

"Just take an even strain," the major said. He was driving at a steady, moderate speed, not appearing to think much about it.

"If you please," Carl said. He sat close against the door. In the dim light from the dashboard clock, he watched water trickling in by the pivot of the vent wing window beside him. It was difficult to sit so that he was not wet by one of the several migrations of water from the leaky top and window margins. Sitting stiffly twisted, he wiped a swath clear on the window with the edge of his hand and looked out. Dead stalks of mallow and ragweed stood in the black running water of the ditch.

Now, beginning in the grotesque form of an official letter, the major said, "It has been brought to my attention that you have been doing a lot of nosing around recently into one of our projects at the bio lab. I have this from several sources." The major looked across at Carl. In the upcast light from the instruments, his face looked puffed and soft.

"I've no idea what you're talking about," Carl said. It took stress to keep his voice level, for his bowels had turned to warm

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

water. "Furthermore, I don't believe you have any right to practically kidnap me."

"Say, there, that's pretty hard language, Doctor," the major said. "I certainly don't mean any offense or anything like that. I'm not trying to get you sore, or anything. We're just having a little talk, see." The major wheedled like a hungry pimp.

Carl turned his face away. "Talk on. I'm not interested." He tried to imagine the appearance of his friend John Moyama in a posture of intimate consultation with this yahoo, and failed. The episode seemed to be operating on several different levels of reality at once.

"What it is, is we have this security problem every place we hire civilians," the major said. "A lot of civilians just don't understand what security means, and they don't seem to catch the fact that they're operating by our rules now. It's a shame about the rules, of course, but that's the way it is. We don't like to be hardnose about it, but we've got to stay right on the old ball. . . . Now, I've got this theory that *speed* is the answer in security problems. What do you do with a headache? You take your aspirin right now, not tomorrow. You get a splinter, you take it out right now. You put out the fire while it's still little. Check? Check." The major had both hands high on the steering wheel and was opening and closing his grip with the force of his argument. Carl watched this in the side of his eye, thinking about home. The major went on, "So what we want right now, Dr. Graves, is a little frank talk, a little old inter-personal relationship. . . . Number one, whose payroll you on? Who signs your checks? Of course, we can find this out, no sweat. I mean, there's nothing we can't find out, given time enough. What we're doing here is, we're saving *time,* see? That's my private theory about this whole business of security. Time. Fast transit time, boy. See? So who signs your checks?" The major grinned at Carl across the car.

Carl Graves, somewhat fuddled with drink, was slow in adapting to the mortal novelties of his predicament. Years of steady effort toward goals of honesty and intellectual candor had left him badly equipped to dodge on quick warning; now the impetus of good habit swept him past the momentary chance to become evil to deal with evil. He said, "It's the bursar of the university. Willis or Wilson, somebody like that."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Sharply, the major said, "Listen, buddy, don't fool with me, or you and I are gonna go round and round together. You know plenty well enough what I meant."

Carl shook his head *no,* then kept on shaking it to clear it, perhaps, or compact some blasted fragments of his existence. He wiped the window beside him again, and put his cold wet palm on his cheek. The country here was flatter; they were passing a dark pine wood that came almost to the running ditch. The road was asphalt, slowly turning. "Take me home," he said.

"Not a while yet."

"There is still such a thing as due process, isn't there?"

"Your civil rights are in good shape, Doc. We're just *talking*. . . . Now then, here's how it is. Uncle and I sign a big piece of Moyama's check, and the college the rest. Who're you taking from besides the college?"

"Nobody."

"How well do you know Alex Jarvis?"

"I never heard of him."

"He knows you."

"I never heard of him."

"All right, then, let's look at your standard of living. Nice house, nice cars, two of 'em. Good clothes, I see. Your visible spending puts you in the eighteen to twenty-two thousand bracket. The highest faculty salary is thirteen five. Yours is twelve even, right?"

Carl was astonished at the man's fullness of information. "Yes," he said, and winced when he realized that merely by beginning to answer questions, he tacitly accepted the terms under which the questioning was taking place. The wedge was entered. "Take me home."

"We're gonna ride and ride and *ride*."

"Where in the world did you get all these ideas?"

"Let me ask the questions, if you don't mind. Man, you've been *noticed*."

"Oh, Lord. I am completely in the dark."

"Sure you are. Even about Alex Jarvis."

"I told you that."

"Sure you told me that. Now, how about that nice living standard you keep up?"

"I borrow," Carl said, and took encouragement at having raised

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

even a trivial resistance to this weird duologue. To Carl, the major sounded like a movie gangster, a walking blond cliché of melodrama, threatening with dark and stupid intimations of punishing power barely restrained. The horror was that this was not a movie but a rainy night, and he was not a gangster but a major in the Air Force of the United States, and Carl could not get up and leave. After a silence, Carl said, "Look, I don't know what's going on, but if you'll tell me what you want me to do to get home, I'll try to do it."

"There's a boy, Doc. Now, how well do you know Alex Jarvis?"

Carl looked out at the edge of the black road running by. He was hollow with wishing he did know Alex Jarvis. Might it be possible or practical to *pretend* to know Alex Jarvis? Could Alex Jarvis, invoked, turn this wet and smelly car around on this endless road? "I *may* have met him, I don't know. You meet so many people you never see again. He could be one of those."

"Fine," the major said. "We'll come back to him later, now that we've established you know him. Life is so simple, Doc, if you just play ball."

"But I—"

"Let's go back to Moyama's work. It's way out of your field, but you pretend to be really interested in it all anyhow. What for? What's your pitch?"

"I'm interested in it for—well, for private reasons."

Major Bales laughed in a friendly way. "No doubt, no doubt."

"You don't understand."

"Sure I do. Now we're getting somewhere. Private reasons, private income. Okay."

"I think I'd better find a lawyer, if you don't mind. I don't want to say any more." Carl had never before seen a situation so determined on crumbling in his mending hands; everything he said made everything worse. Because Carl was a practical American Calvinist, he felt it likely that all this was a juridic visitation on him for something done or not done, been or not been. Yet, knowing he was a Calvinist, and still deeply sunk in the pervasive original sin that only rigorous drudgery can get a man out of, he could not think where he had failed this seriously. In the past, his Calvinism had worked for him; it had been useful, and so, used. He

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

had tried hard and continuously, and now he watched in bewilderment as it all came to make no difference.

"You won't need any lawyer, Doc. I'm guessing that your name'll never come into it, that you'll never even have to see the inside of the Committee Room. There's no need, see." The major spoke from the wells of his generosity. "See, I don't see you as a *big* traitor. I'm almost sure you're just an innocent *dupe*. So, what we'll do is, we'll keep driving along here till you remember first one thing an' another. Okay?"

Carl, in the midst of prime decisions, did not answer at once. He was considering from very close the sweet purity of panic, and panic's universal specific, action. Sitting rigid, he saw himself with an actor's forethoughtful eye: He would push the cape in heavy folds over the major's head, and force the car door open against the wind, and step out on the blurred running road. After the first hard bounce he would slide and roll and yaw a hundred dirty feet on the slippery wet mat of weeds, and would think only of the total ruin of his beautiful brown tweed suit.

Carl withdrew his hand from the door handle and folded his arms.

"How about it?" the major asked.

Carl compressed his lips as if against vomit, to seal down the stammering falsetto that surely would rise if he let himself speak. After all, he was not a sixteen year old Japanese boy-pilot, drugged with the beauties of fraternal death. Was there *no* way to come at this Bales?

"Come on. Just let go," the major begged good-naturedly.

Carl set himself more firmly, with his jaw in his collar, even as he was taken by surprise by a good wild idea. Now when he spoke he had no fear his voice would break: "Major, aren't you what they call a career man?"

The major shifted in his seat and let the car float toward the edge of the road. "What? Yes, fifteen years already. I'm just thirty-two." He caught the car with a swerve.

"You didn't get where you are now by inventing theories of your own—security management methods—and trying them out alone, without the approval of your superiors, did you? You've followed orders, haven't you? You've tried to understand as well

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

as you could what was expected of you, then *done* it as well as you could, and no more. No volunteering." Carl stopped to think.

"Now you just wait a minute," the major said.

"Something like this could mean the end for you, couldn't it? Would Colonel—Colonel Schwartz—" (The name had flown back into him just in time.) "—ever be able to trust you again? Or General Hofstader?"

The major took his foot from the accelerator and let the car coast in the rain.

"Think ahead," Carl said.

"They'll stand behind me," Major Bales said in a low voice, still coasting. Carl might guess, but he could never know the size of the major's heaving tragedy now, as all he *was* rose up and overwhelmed his bright new hope of being something else. Providentially, a reflector-marked crossroad came in the lights; the major slewed the car into it and stopped, saying, "Well, *shit!*" like a cry for help. Abusing the loose, leaking convertible with his angry manipulations, he made it roar, and spun it around in reverse and lurched off down the wet road they had come.

On the way back to the village Carl hardly breathed lest he capsize and spoil the good he had done. The major said nothing, driving fast in the streaming rain; for grim amusement from time to time he bore on the springy steering wheel as if to wring it off by the spokes.

Near the university the major said in a flat voice, "Somewhere around here aren't you?"

"Anywhere along here," Carl said softly, trying to soothe.

"No, sir! I want it exactly! I was gonna give you a simple lift home, egghead, and you don't get out till we *are* home. Hear?"

"Left one block at that street there. I'm the last house but one on the right."

The car dived in spray as it turned, and Carl slid along the wet seat and struck the door without comment. The major stopped the car before Carl's house by climbing the curb and locking the brakes. "Here you are, egghead, home safe and sound. All in one pretty piece. No hard feelings." Carl was already out on the brick sidewalk. The major leaned over to see him, pushing out his smooth round face. "But listen, egghead. Be advised I am watching you from now on. I mean forever. You'll always have a friend looking after you from now on." He lunged, and hauled the door

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to him with nearly force enough to fold it and pull it through. The car fell off the curb in a saggy motion and barged off down the middle of the dark street.

Alone in the diminishing rain, Carl stood to breathe a while, watching the pink middle-class glow of the drawn draperies (lined and expensive) of his home. When he was somewhat restored and felt he would not fall if he walked, he hugged himself with his arms under the tight cape, still somehow in possession of the copy of the *Journal,* and humped along the wall to the maple where he had hung his fine umbrella.

The umbrella was not there. It was nowhere along the one low limb he could have hung it on. He shook the water out of his hair and studied the ground under the limb. It had not fallen there.

The yellow porch light came on and the door opened a little. "Yes?" asked Ellen through the crack. "Who is it, please?" Meaning (as he knew her): Announce yourself, or I shall call the police without any discussion whatever.

"Ellen."

"Oh, Carl!"

"The umbrella's gone. I hung it right here, and it's gone. Somebody stole it right off my own tree."

"No, no, it's all right. I saw you then, and came out after you and got it. Here it is. Right here. I was afraid somebody might take it." She came out on the front steps in her bathrobe, leaning sideways to open the umbrella, and went down to him in its shelter.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LYSANDER KEMP

The Conquest

. . . and halted there, My Lord, to gather wood
And to fill our rusting helms with the gold berries
We found in a little swale under the ridge.
They were tart but harmless. Later we saw the throes
Of the dying sun as it dripped blood on the water,
All of us silent until Gutiérrez laughed.
That night I heard him weep and cry out in his sleep,
And the horses whickered and sighed in the dry thickets,
And what with the lack of souls to convert, and of gold,
Silver and jewels, which were our goals as well,
I could not sleep, My Lord, and after writing
A page of this account, I prayed for hours,
Although I cannot think that I was heard.

xxiii
At dawn we marched to the coast, but it was as dead
As the dead hills behind us: dead gray sands,
Toad-colored rocks, multitudinous dead shells.
Gutiérrez laughed again, until the scum
Ran down his beard. We slept, or tried to sleep,
Beside the tide's insomniac lunge and collapse
And lapse, lunge and collapse the whole night long,
And then marched north between the dunes and the surf.

In the afternoon we came to a silt-red river,
From which we drank and watered our spent horses,
Although it was thick and warm, like oozing blood.
We then marched inland, up the southern bank.
At nightfall, my old white mare, my poor old *Moonlight*,
Groaned and fell dead beneath me. She was a feast
For all my starving men, who grilled her flesh
On the tips of their swords, with my consent, and drank
The river water as if it were good red wine,
And later sang their ballads. I could not eat.
I walked apart, and falling on my knees

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I prayed again, to one saint after another,
Alone under the starlight in the dew.

xxiv
A march of five days brought us to a lake,
A sweet-water sea ringed all about with mountains.
I named it for Her Majesty, My Lord,
Because of its grace. We rested there a fortnight,
Eating the curious roots, fruits and berries
We found on the slopes, and the stranger fish from the lake,
Regaining our strength and watching the dry mountains
Turn ochre or amber, brass or bronze, depending
On any of many stupendous daylights changing
Over the waters, while the waters changed
From pink to silver and blue, from gold to black
In the morning, at noon, in the afternoon and evening.
All that beauty, My Lord, and our full bellies,
Consoled us for having found no human trace,
No gems, no precious metal, nothing at all.

On the night of the third day, we lost our chestnut
Stallion *Buffoon,* but only for that night.
He snapped his tether and galloped into the scrub,
And Cruz, the sentry, lighting a torch at the fire,
Ran out to bring him in. Behind a thicket
He found Gutiérrez and Márquez clasped together,
Both of them naked as snakes. He killed them both,
And then reported. He and I together
Buried them where they died, without a cross.
Buffoon came back at dawn, of his own accord.

xxv
We then marched south, across the lakeside mountains.
On the fourth day, we reached a conical peak
With a stream or plume of bright white cloud at the crest,
As if it were smoke that fumed up from within.
It was not. We marched around it, keeping south,
With the land falling then plunging away before us.
Eight days later we blundered into the jungle.
You know, My Lord, how we have suffered from thirst

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

And hunger, and failure too: but the green flames
That twist and tower out of this flame-red soil
Are . . . Oh, My Lord, I fear we are in Hell!

I have prayed. I am calm. We buried Castellanos,
Who was bitten by a snake. It is known, My Lord,
That Death can lurk in many subtle disguises,
And here he lurks as a serpent, cold and cruel,
Though decked in delirious finery. As for Life,
A dove in a cage at home, it romps in these trees
As a hundred birds in a hundred lustful colors.
I have prayed. I am not calm. I am afraid.

xxvi
On the ninth day we came to a glaring beach
Where a sea-turtle was laying eggs in the sand.
We ate her, ate her eggs, and then marched east,
On rising ground, but once again found nothing. . . .

ALAN SILLITOE

Sameness

Everything should be the same:
Right from the beginning
Poets have wanted it—
Similarities, Edens.
Those who worship horseshoes
Or the moon are unified by
Wanting everything
To be the same.

Uniforms obsess them:
All trees of a certain sort

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Match perfectly enough
To have one name;
Untold million flowers of one colour
Have one image in the catalogue.

All eyes are eyes—
Of different colours maybe,
But joined by a single look:
In the beginning was the word
But one book.

Everything must be the same
Before in basic truths
Poets can discover
Differences.

The Posada Smile

Suddenly insane
No one can get him out
He sits in the fireplace, right inside
Where ashes once burned, flames
Feeling up into the black chimney
Like his fingers now trying;

But cold and safe, legs drawn up,
Wan smile, he sits in his fireplace,
Right in, away from us, and safe
Unless someone has a crowbar
And no heart, to prise him out:
And he smiles wanly because no one has.

But if and when, he'd be a different man
A man no longer; and he smiles
A moonless bleak smile of victory,
Insane as the sun
That cleanses better than the fire
Or this prison that it burned in.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Saltpoem

They call me a fish
I am found not too far from the coast
A barrier you scrambled out of once:
You turned around and caught me in your nets.

My movements are slow
Music copied in your works of art:
I guide myself slowly through
The intricacy of my waters.

I eat life, salt
Live by monster fish who, wherever they look,
Kill my eyes with pictures of the final fear
Draining my fishblood and my fintips white:

Living in my grave I sometimes dance
To think it is so vast and clean,
Need no passing over to the dark
When sharks bite, or nets rip at me with knives of sky.

I am a fish with speech and balance
My life is perfect no matter when it ends,
Like a poem fashioned in my image
Written with my salt and freedom.

RUTH FAINLIGHT

Equinox

More than a week of storms
Storms and sickness
Has stood between now and my last clear view of the moon.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In two more nights she'll be full. Thunder, bruised clouds,
A sea like melted stone
Confirm her waxing arrogance.

Full moons had no such heralds through the summer
Nights of stars, moon discreet
Somewhere in all that glitter. Now the stars have no chance.

This is her season of power, she is everywhere,
The wind scoops mock moons
White crescents of waves on the violent water.

Three times magnified, she flashes through streaming cloud
Like a wrecker's beacon;
Her lurid halo makes the sky seem hollow.

Time is slowed down by storms; more will happen
Before she gains full circle
Than between one full moon and the next in calm weather.

Cages

Dawn wind and rising sun get trapped by the trees
Stain my eastward windows into Moorish lamps
Cages of light fretted like stilled twigs
That flicker again as the candle flame stirs.

Whipping and flashing shadows on the grainy wall
The branches make a wicker cage. Who is in it
Me or the sun? Caught like a golden stag
He twists his horns in panic but cannot free them.

Neither candle flame nor stag, the sun's globe
Shudders clear and the wind dies.
If there is even one cage, our shared urge
Will consume us, or burn free.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BURTON RAFFEL

Mary Barnard's Sappho

A POET MUCH TALKED OF FOR MANY CENTURIES, much talked of still, but like too many poets very little read, Sappho now enjoys as nearly perfect an English translation as one can find, a great translation, an immensely moving translation, complete, beautiful, deserving of endless praise. "I do not see how (it) could be bettered," said Dudley Fitts—the perfect critic, here, for his *Poems From the Greek Anthology* has exactly the same purity, the same aching beauty, "stripped and hard." In his own words, again, Mary Barnard's *Sappho* "is exact translation; but in its composition, the spacing, the arrangement of stresses, it is also high art." Just how high, indeed, can be seen when we compare Miss Barnard's versions to those of any and all other translators, even Richmond Lattimore, even Kenneth Rexroth.

> You may forget but
> Let me tell you
> this: someone in
> some future time
> will think of us

Willis Barnstone renders these lines:

> Somebody, I tell you,
> someone in future time
> will remember us.

Barnstone is by no means inept. Yet his "Somebody, I tell you" becomes almost farcical, almost melodramatic posturing, when set against Miss Barnard's pure poignancy. How small a difference there seems to be between "someone in/some future time" and "someone in future time," and how broad a gap there in fact is. Breaking the line adds exactly the right rhythmic lurch; adding "some" to "in future time" emphasizes precisely that which requires emphasizing, the indeterminacy, the wry tone of bitter-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sweetness which, in Barnstone's version, simply is not there. He makes Sappho defiant, even a bit heroic. Miss Barnard knows better.[1]

Here is Richmond Lattimore's version of this same brief passage:

> But I claim there will be some who remember us when we are gone.

This does not fall into the errors Barnstone makes, but neither is it the superb poetry Miss Barnard gives us. Lattimore handles the words cleanly—yet "what a passionate and breath-taking poetess she was," Professor Kitto rightly says, and where, in Lattimore's rendering, is the passion? Where, above all, is the hitch in the breath, the gasp, that kept A. E. Housman from reciting such poetry to himself as he shaved, since the excitement of it led to the prompt shedding of blood?

One of Sappho's best-known fragments, sometimes called "To Atthis," is expertly rendered by C. M. Bowra:

> I loved you, Atthis, once, long, long ago . . .
> You seemed to me a small, ungainly child.

The broken rhythms of the first line are very well placed. The ellipsis is an important stroke (Mr. Lattimore is too cavalier of such touches, I think). There is a hint of something like sentimentality in the handling of the second line, which also lacks the sense of motion caught in the first, but the wry charm manages to come through. Mr. Barnstone, once again, comes off badly by comparison, though I repeat that he is not inept, only less able:

[1] Since this essay was written Professor Barnstone has published a full bilingual edition of Sappho, with a variety of supporting scholarly apparatus (the most interesting being 19 pages of "Testimonia," "the chief references in Greek and Latin prose and poetry to Sappho and to her poetry"). Of the 140 poems and fragments 90 had appeared in Barnstone's 1962 *Greek Lyric Poetry* (one which had appeared there is omitted). The total translated by Miss Barnard is exactly 100.

Barnstone's new versions are on the whole very competent, though the majority are fragments of no great interest; more important, the earlier translations have been extensively and on the whole very well revised. Professor Barnstone has seen the merits of sparseness; he has much sharpened his use of enjambment; and he has learned how to make use of typography for rhythmical purposes. His versions are still not so good, by and large, as Miss Barnard's, but they are much, much better than they were and are I think the second-best set of Sappho translations we have. I could not enthusiastically recommend *Greek Lyric Poetry*. I should like warmly to commend this new volume (Anchor Books, 1965).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I loved you, Atthis, long ago,
when my girlhood was in full flower
and you were like a graceless child.

How small a difference between Mr. Bowra's good first line and Mr. Barnstone's poor one: much of it is in the carefully handled rhythms Bowra employs, and much of it is in the repetition of "long" and the deliberate suspension effected by "once." Mr. Bowra knows that the poet must be in no hurry to deliver his wares. "Girlhood . . . in full flower" is too blatantly bad to require comment, and Mr. Barnstone's last line is good clean prose, without the tenderness required, without the poignancy possible. Kenneth Rexroth attempts something quite different with these lines, a kind of single utterance very difficult to sustain:

I fell in love with you, Atthis,
Long ago, when you were still
An ungainly little girl.

One cannot criticize much here. It simply lacks the warmth, the wry flavorfulness, though one cannot fault Mr. Rexroth's diction or his sense of verse-motion. The "single utterance" quality, it seems to me—even-flowing cadences which pause but do not stop, which certainly do not break until the entire utterance has been completed, as it were in one long breath—is here basically at fault.

And then Miss Barnard's version:

But you, monkey face
Atthis, I loved you
long ago while you
still seemed to me a
small ungracious child

If it is hard to remove the medal from Mr. Bowra's craftsmanlike translation, it is nonetheless quite necessary. The sheer penetration Miss Barnard achieves is staggering: she *is* Sappho, here. Nothing less could have brought to life that astonishing first line. "Monkey face/Atthis": none of the other translators has set the poem in this "contemporary" context, all assume (or seem to assume) a pri-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

marily backward-looking poem. Miss Barnard assures us, instantly, that Sappho still loves; the backward glance is therefore doubly moving, the kind of lover's musing which heightens today, not yesterday. And Mr. Bowra's vaguely imperfect second line cannot hold a candle to Miss Barnard's rendering, with its deft hops and twirls, with the rich associations brought out by her use of the single word "still." One hears, suddenly, the poet mocking herself at the same time as she mocks the small girl Atthis had been: Mr. Rexroth's use of this same word does not evoke any such response. Sappho, again, becomes "breath-taking" only in Miss Barnard's presentation.

But what of the longer distance? I have been discussing, in part for convenience, in part from necessity, only very short bits of poetry: not much of what survives by Sappho is of any great length. There is however some moderately long poetry and one example should be considered, if only to do justice to Mr. Lattimore, a justly famous translator of Homer. Here is his rendering of what is sometimes called "To a Bride," though neither he nor Miss Barnard give the poem any title:

> Like the very gods in my sight is he who
> sits where he can look in your eyes, who listens
> close to you, to hear the soft voice, its sweetness
> murmur in love and
>
> laughter, all for him. But it breaks my spirit;
> underneath my breast all the heart is shaken.
> Let me only glance where you are, the voice dies,
> I can say nothing,
>
> But my lips are stricken to silence, under-
> neath my skin the tenuous flame suffuses;
> nothing shows in front of my eyes, my ears are
> muted in thunder.
>
> And the sweat breaks running upon me, fever
> shakes my body, paler I turn than grass is;
> I can feel that I have been changed, I feel that
> death has come near me.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

This is very good, it is moving; it does not, I feel, sound much like the poet of whom the commentators speak. "In antiquity only Catullus can approach her happy gift of making the highest art seem like the spontaneous, unstudied utterance of a passionate soul," Professors Oates and Murphy wrote in 1945; they also asserted, and it was then still accurate, that "No translation will ever recapture all the grace and charm of Sappho's poetry, and the English reader, at first sight, may find it hard to understand her tremendous reputation among the ancients, who called her the Tenth Muse and ranked her with Homer." The version they print, indeed, makes it very hard to understand "her tremendous reputation"; only a few lines of Walter Headlam's rendering need be quoted:

> Blest beyond earth's bliss, with heaven I deem him
> Blest, the man that in thy presence near thee
> Face to face may sit, and while thou speakest,
> Listening may hear thee . . .

There aren't many clearer examples of rhyme-forced redundancy than "in thy presence near thee." There is a kind of charm about this translation, however, even a lightness of touch which I do not think Mr. Lattimore has caught. Here, finally, is Miss Barnard—and Sappho herself:

> He is more than a hero
>
> He is a god in my eyes—
> the man who is allowed
> to sit beside you—he
>
> who listens intimately
> to the sweet murmur of
> your voice, the enticing
>
> laughter that makes my own
> heart beat fast. If I meet
> you suddenly, I can't

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

speak—my tongue is broken;
a thin flame runs under
my skin; seeing nothing,

hearing only my own ears
drumming, I drip with sweat;
trembling shakes my body

and I turn paler than
dry grass. At such times
death isn't far from me

The Greek text comes to us from Longinus' *On the Sublime*—and with the possible exception of that curiously weak last line I think Miss Barnard has shown us why the poem belongs in a volume so titled. I doubt that she will have any competitors—she has none, now—in your lifetime, reader, or mine. Her *Sappho,* as beautifully produced as it is translated, is a dollar-and-a-quarter paperback, published by the University of California Press (1962). It belongs on the best-seller lists, in the highest place: for few books which actually enjoy that lofty post can one make such a statement.

A COMMUNICATION

Dear Sirs,

In my review-article in the Winter, 1964-65 issue of THE HUDSON REVIEW, I wrote in a footnote (p. 602) that Professor Arndt had requested and his publishers had agreed to the withdrawal of the present edition of his translation of *Evgenii Onegin* in order that Professor Arndt might make some corrections based on Nabokov's criticisms. Professor Arndt informs me that he made no such request and no such withdrawal took place. When the first printing neared exhaustion he took occasion to incorporate a number of revisions based on criticisms and suggestions from a variety of sources; but nothing was withdrawn. I apologise for my error.

SIDNEY MONAS

Rochester, New York

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

JOHN SIMON

Theatre Chronicle

THE THING, NOWADAYS, IS HAPPENINGS. In a recent interview in *Art International,* Allan Kaprow, their putative pop, announced that he is working on international Happenings, to take place concurrently in various parts of the globe. Susan Sontag has hailed them as one of the most interesting forms of contemporary theatre, and she may, heaven help us, be right. Now we have the first critical anthology of them, *Happenings,* written and edited by Michael Kirby.[1] This ludicrous non-book should delight Kaprowphiliacs, but others, too, may learn from it: if, for example, a girl comes crawling at you across the floor and starts untying your shoelaces, you should know it is a Happening and kick her in the face. If, however, one does not belong to the privileged few who get to attend Happenings, there was something not unlike them available for mass consumption at the City Center. I am referring to the visit of the Moscow Art Theatre, with a repertoire consisting of a dramatization of *Dead Souls, Three Sisters, The Cherry Orchard,* and a piece of agitprop dramaturgy by one Pogodin, entitled *Kremlin Chimes.* The remarkable things were not going on on stage.

What went on up there was merely slightly pathetic and slightly risible. It will be recalled that even in the Moscow Art's heyday under Stanislavsky, Chekhov used to be quite upset about some of the things the great director did to his plays. But what the Moscow Art has been doing to both Chekhov and Stanislavsky over the decades is far worse. The Soviets love embalming. In Red Square, one can see Lenin embalmed. In the Soviet Writers' Home in Moscow, one can see the embalmed body of Samuil Marshak lying in state. And at the Moscow Art, one can see Chekhov embalmed, the actors lying in state-approved interpretations of the plays. For Chekhov is being done as nearly as possible as under Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko, except for some added horseplay and some tendentious changes. Thus Lopakhin, the boorish arriviste of *The Cherry Orchard,* becomes a basically correct and gentlemanly fellow, to show that the lower classes really deserved to take over. Or Chebutykin, at the end of *The Three Sisters,* is interpreted not as a cynical old parasite, but as someone who through compassionate understanding points to a better Russia to come. In various ways, things are made more acceptable politically, or, simply, more upbeat, which amounts to the same thing.

The changes, however, are far less distressing than the lack of change. The customary defense that admirers of the Moscow Art's incredibly old-fashioned productions will proffer is that, yes, these are

[1] HAPPENINGS, ed. by *Michael Kirby.* E. P. Dutton and Co. $6.95.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

museum pieces, presented reverently behind glass cases, but don't we enjoy old paintings and sculpture and furniture in our museums? So why not Chekhov's plays as they were done by a master director in a renowned theatre, exactly as the author and his contemporaries beheld them? The answer, of course, is that paintings and furniture are objects and cannot, should not, be changed—though even they are not allowed to gather the dust of the ages, but are removed from time to time for cleaning or restoring or whatever is needed to show them off to best advantage. Now, where living people are concerned —and not only the actors, but also and above all the characters they portray are living people—there must be keeping up with the times, not embalming. Besides, it takes a lot of living to make a mausoleum a museum.

We got slow tempos, insufficient or uninteresting movement, ponderous delivery and chilling attitudinizing, uncharming actors, antiquated notions of stage design and uninventive costumes, caricatures drawn with a sledge-hammer in Gogol, bovine attempts at farce in Chekhov—including some rather tasteless interpolations. There were exceptions, to be sure. Alexei Gribov, for example, proved himself an actor completely versatile and always commanding; one or two others were scarcely less accomplished. But others, like Pavel Massalsky, Mikhail Zimin, or most of the women. . . . Can you imagine a Gaev who is an utter, grey nonentity even in his moments of flamboyant self-dramatization? No. But here you could see one. Can you conceive of a Masha carrying on like Nita Naldi when vamphood was in flower? No. But here she was.

Well, that is what happens with embalming. People who see Lenin's mummy tend to think that it is a phoney—a wax figure. But the point about a mummy is that even if it is real, it is phoney. A production of Shakespeare that tells us how it was when people feared the rebellious Essex or Catholic plots against the Queen, or reconstructs what it was like to perform at the Globe Theatre in broad daylight, or tries to recreate the English pronunciation of Shakespeare's time, is of no serious interest to us. The purpose of art is not to take us into a given time, but to take us out of time altogether, into a realm of truth where the temporal ceases to matter. And this can be done only by making the play as new as possible—as if every performance were the world première. And it is surely easier for a work of art to move ahead in time, for genius to keep up with the shifting ways of ordinary mortals, than for us with our earthy limitations to become our own ancestors. But this is something that the Moscow Art taxidermists fail to understand. And, alas, there will always be people for whom poetry is "thou" and "yond" and "e'er" and not what some daring young poet is writing today, people for whom the stuffed owl on their desk is more real a bird than the one glimpsed on the wing, in a flash.

But I had not thought that the death of taste had undone so many.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

What went on in the auditorium was more pathetic than *The Three Sisters,* more absurd than *The Cherry Orchard,* more grotesque than *Dead Souls*—even had they been done well. The audience consisted, first, of Russian emigrés, who understand Russian, to be sure, but not the theatre—for whom this was a sentimental journey back to their childhood and the enchanted theatre of their youth. Then there were all the semi-literate theatre people, theatre buffs, cultural snobs, rememberers of the Moscow Art's first visit to New York in '23 and descendants of these rememberers, former or current leftists to whom the Moscow Art for doctrinaire reasons represents the acme of dramatic achievement, and all that piously well-meaning bourgeoisie to whom it has been brought home that repertory is a blessing, but not as we might conceive it, only as those illustrious, tradition-drenched foreign companies can. And, of course, there were the campy homosexuals, to whom a play like *Kremlin Chimes,* performed in Russian, seemed a screamingly hilarious mating of the Bolshoi Ballet with *Dracula's Daughters.*

For those in the audience who wished to pay extra, the management provided transistorized closed-circuit radios, over which a quavering-voiced Russian-accented crone and a callow young Britisher supplied poor running translations croakingly or lethargically read; it was, as someone observed, like listening to one's childhood piano teacher and a BOAC purser indulging in an improbable party game. When people grew tired of this equivocal hearing aid and removed their earphones, these emitted a nasty little buzz—so that the auditorium was at all times invaded by a horde of angry crickets. Added to this was the noise of frantic explanations circulating among the audience, frenzied applause for the exit of every bit player, hectic laughter at any little stage joke both from those spectators who understood Russian and from those who felt obliged to emulate them; in sum, quite a concert. Moreover, for all their professed love of art, many people were subconsciously eager to miss as much as possible of these foreign-tongued goings on, so that for at least fifty minutes after curtain time late arrivers were still causing minor commotions on the way to their seats. After the first fifty minutes, there were others (admittedly, not many) who, insufficiently primed about the glories of martyrdom in the cause of culture, began to leave, causing minor commotions on the way out. All this coming and going was, of course, a boon for those who had not been able to rent transistors (of which there was a limited supply), or whose transistors had given out (as quite a few did), for it provided them with a spectacle they could enjoy without a language barrier.

In the intermissions, I had some interesting experiences. A retired actress was raving to me about how wonderful it all was: true ensemble playing, real Chekhov as she had never seen it done before. When I ventured to ask whether she thought that Gaev, for example, was be-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ing played with distinction, she asked, "Gaev? Which one is Gaev?" A highly successful young producer-director informed me how great it was to hear Chekhov, at last, in Russian. I asked him whether he knew the language. "Of course not," he replied. Leaving *The Cherry Orchard* after the second act[2]—as was the director of perhaps the most important repertory company in the country—I noticed one of our most dazzling young directors lingering in the lobby. He told me he didn't care if the acting was nothing special, the mere pleasure of watching such masterpieces performed was enough. The bell had rung long ago, there was no one left in the foyer. With heavy feet, the young director shuffled back into the auditorium.

Seldom indeed have I seen such an orgy of mass enthusiasm so imposingly incommensurate with what was being offered. Thousands of people were applauding and cheering themselves sore and hoarse to prove to the Russians that we love them and would they, please, spare us with their bombs! (God knows what the things that hit the City Center stage were supposed to be.) Others, perhaps, were expressing their political sympathies. Still others were proving that they knew true art when they saw it. Some, possibly, were reacting against the dearth of good repertory and ensemble acting in this country by exalting the first foreign aggregation that crossed their path. A good many, no doubt, had read the abjectly deferential notices in the papers. Altogether, you could tell by the noise that an artistic event of the first magnitude had been successfully detonated.

And how does repertory thrive on our own shores? The Association of Producing Artists has been doing bang-up business at the Phoenix, banging the hell out of Tolstoy and Giraudoux. (I could not bring myself to go to their third offering, *Man and Superman:* the thought of Ellis Rabb and Nancy Marchand incarnating—if that is the word—the eternal male and the eternal female, respectively, is more than this flesh can bear.) Of *War and Peace,* not much need be said. I beg the reader to stifle his distaste while I repeat for the two hundred and ninety-eighth time (it's just as unpleasant for me) that great novels cannot be dramatized, only prostituted on the stage. When a narrator comes on and announces that the material from *War and Peace* has been "selected, arranged, and even invented in the hope of serving Tolstoy's purpose," we know that what is going to be served is not Tolstoy's purpose but smorgasbord. Good performances by Sydney Walker, Rosemary Harris, and Keene Curtis as Napoleon, were all but drowned out by the poor acting of everybody else and by a dreary script, which, among other things, obliged Natasha to walk away from Andrei's deathbed right into Pierre's arms without even a decent period of mourning—say, thirty seconds. Peter Wexler's devis-

[2] The management saw fit to grant me reviewers' tickets for only two of the productions. On tickets that have to be paid for, I do not feel obligated to hope for last-minute miracles.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ing of a miniature Battle of Borodino was fine; unfortunately, just about everything else was miniature, too.

Judith, on the other hand, though not one of Giraudoux's best plays, might still yield lyrical and stinging theatre, for, even here, Giraudoux could turn the drama into something like a Provençal sestina laced with Parisian wit. Instead, we got a translation by John K. Savacool, which, though not gone bad, tasted rather like the remnants of a gourmet dinner by the time they reach the servants' table. Thus Walter Kerr squarely blamed Giraudoux for having written "a paroxysm of passion and humanity"; but if the "critic's critic" had bothered to check the French, he would have found "*un accès de passion et d'humanité,*" or, simply, "a fit of passion and humanity." Yet the translation was less culpable than the various cuts. Some things (like a reference to "a fine Jewish nose") were omitted lest they give offense; others, presumably, just to speed things up. Only that is precisely what the play cannot stand: its reversals come so thick and fast that cutting causes one *peripeteia* to stumble over the next—and, indeed, parts of the play seemed to be more Feydeau than Giraudoux.

This was largely the fault of Ellis Rabb's direction, as well. For one thing, Rabb did all he could to keep this comic tragedy as close to comedy as possible; for another, he did his best to strip it of contemporary relevance by hiding its saucy anachronisms as though they were painful catachreses. Lastly, he missed or ignored what the play really is: an argument with God, a demonstration of how the supernal—whether it exists, or is merely believed to exist—infiltrates and takes over the human will. And partly, too, because of the direction, partly because of her own limitations, Rosemary Harris failed to give us a Judith who goes from charming socialite *allumeuse,* through frightened virgin and profoundly aroused woman, all the way to a fanatic who allows God's angel—if it is God's angel—to persuade her to bask in a macabre sanctity she herself had most disclaimed. What we got was a rather good impersonation of Audrey Hepburn, in other words, the imitation of an imitation. As Holofernes, Paul Sparer gave his usual pompously overlubricated performance: he was dripping with leers and squeezing out greasy words complacently. As a hotly desirable courtesan, Nancy Marchand perfectly suggested a sleepwalking New England spinster, and others performed no less approximatively. As a homosexual Assyrian officer, Keene Curtis alone managed to make a mark.

APA is the ideal repertory company for a middlebrow culture: any group that offers Ibsen, Chekhov, Shaw and other worthy staples, that very carefully never puts on anything more experimental than a farce by George M. Cohan, that has its summer base at a large Mid-Western university and its winter season in New York, that clusters several American character actors around a genteelly British star, that has a young or at any rate youngish look on stage, will be forgiven anything, even the feeblest actors and flabbiest directors.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In the late season, a certain number of more or less sinister plays came to haunt us on and off Broadway. Arthur Kopit contributed a short-lived bill of two one-acters. *Sing to Me Through Open Windows* is one of this youthful playwright's particularly youthful efforts, which attempts to make a boy's coming of age sound like Beckett, but manages only diluted Maeterlinck. *The Day the Whores Came Out to Play Tennis* is better, what with some funny lines and a situation that has a somewhat Ionescoan flavor. But there is something inadequate about a Jewish country club as a symbol for Western civilization, and a bunch of affluent whores (who remain unseen but not unheard: they break wind in unison and pelt the building with tennis balls that eventually prove wreckers' balls) as the symbol for the forces that will destroy it. The Jewish bit tends toward a mere takeoff on Broadway's foisoning Jewish comedies, and the whores end up suggesting one of those misogynist conceits of our homosexual playwrights: the play, neither quite funny nor quite frightening enough to begin with, slips out of focus. Still, if the staging had been better, and all the acting up to that of Anthony Holland and John D. Irving, something might have come through.

Considerably more unsavory and very much more unbalanced is Herbert Lieberman's *Matty and the Moron and Madonna.* This item about the horrors of tenement life was picked by Kenneth Tynan as the 1963 winner of the University of Chicago's Charles E. Sergel Drama Competition, and though its dramatic argument is far from clear, it may conceivably do as an argument for slum clearance. It is all about a homicidal maniac of a mother and her bright little son, who, good son and good Catholic that he is, allows himself to be axed to death by her after various unsatisfactory encounters with his drunken slob of a father, sundry whores (some saintly, some not), and a moron whose hobby is ringing a bell. The writing ranges from "tough" to "symbolist" complete with mimed visions for the mother. Both modes are summed up by the two epigraphs affixed to the play: "I do not look away. The terrified people left to the dark are in the tenement of my own street.—Donald Roy Horwitz" (whoever he may be), and "Somewhere down the darkened hall the Moron tolls his awful bell.—H. L." (presumably Herbert Lieberman, unless it be Henry Longfellow). There you have it: the tough not looking away, and the symbolist tolling of the awful bell (note also the symbolist capital M). As for the production, despite a couple of good performances, it served chiefly to display José Quintero's directorial insufficiencies.

Also on exhibit is the 1964 winner of the Sergel Award, Charles Nolte's *Do Not Pass Go,* picked by Robert Brustein. It is preferable to its predecessor because it has, at least, a few jokes to recommend it, but there are hardly enough of them to stuff a green pepper with, let alone a black comedy in three acts. The scene is the stockroom of a supermarket in which a sadistic, homosexual TV actor between assignments works along with a senile, schizoid little man. The young

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

man taunts and torments the old geezer, and finally kills him by locking him into a walk-in refrigerator. There is some incidental fun at the expense of our advertised-product-conscious society, but the bullying and maddening of a wretched dimwit—a sort of inverted *Angel Street*—achieves little beyond nausea. Charles Nolte, the author, plays the muscle-beachboy all too well, and Roberts Blossom is an adequate victim, but the whole thing is half-pint Pinter and watered down at that.

Vastly more dispiriting is Ronald Ribman's *Harry, Noon and Night,* scenes from a young Jewish American's life in postwar Munich. There are three essentially unconnected vignettes that have very little point individually, and none whatever taken as a whole. But they do allow for elaborate pawing of a whore's breasts (an organ for which the author rattles off a thesaurus' worth of vulgar synonyms, and goes on to top this with a Homeric catalogue of different types of animal dung), a mock copulation, a hunchback's picking his nose and toes and peddling his nails as sacred relics, the chopping up of a mackerel into countless tiny pieces (you can even smell it), a man's going to the toilet while another watches through a chink, the toilet's not flushing and assaulting the man with his own excreta, all kinds of jolly references to gas ovens and lampshades made of human skin, various sadomasochistic scenes between two men in and around a bed (the bedding does not change, but the men do), and several other goodies which I have happily managed to forget.

There were able performances by everyone except the lead, Joel Grey, who was, if possible, worse than his material. But what made this production interesting was its being done at St. Clement's Church by The American Place Theatre whose president is the Rev. Sidney Lanier, and with money from the Ford Foundation. It is comforting to know that there is a way—gratuitous scatology and brutal obscenity—of pleasing both God and Mammon.

The prize horror of the season, however, is Terrence McNally's *And Things That Go Bump in the Night.* This is a devilishly embarrassing situation for those of us who, along with Philip Roth, deplored the crypto-homosexual play in which the pederast appeared disguised as an aging actress, a rebellious Negro, or Everyman. Well now, here we have an honest-to-goodness homosexual play, and is it ever an abomination! Anything is better than the hero as mother-craving-and-hating, alternately poetic and bitchy, sadistic but oh-so-red-blooded-American, smart-aleck little creep. And the mother and little sister who are his sidekicks—the perfect mother and sister for a homosexual: females clever and imaginative enough to envy, selfish and ruthless enough to want to strangle!

Let us dismiss the ostensible plot, which makes no sense, anyway: something about an unknown, seemingly atomic, "It" that murderously rules the streets by night, though by day life continues un-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

changed, and about people locking themselves in bomb-proof cellars surrounded by high-voltage fences to be safe at night. Let us ignore also the paraphernalia of the play: fancy sound and light effects, tape-recorded dialogue, intercoms, PA systems, slide projections (of two men going to bed together) and whatnot. No need to detain ourselves with the borrowings, obvious and heavy, from *The Zoo Story, Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* and *Tiny Alice,* though translated back into homosexual relationships. A little harder to disregard is the writing: "*Sigfrid:* The sadness of Shakespeare, the enduring sadness of Florence, and the necessarily greater sadness of someone alone in the park. *Clarence:* What do you mean? *Sigfrid:* And that's the sadness of Clarence . . . I'm not your friend—and that's the sadness of Sigfrid."

What matters is the basic situation of that supremely vicious mother-son-daughter triangle that would die of internecine blood-lust if it were not for an endless line of victims, male or (though these, typically, we are not shown) female, whom sonny-boy lures into the family's nocturnal lair; he has sado-masochistic sex with them, and later, with the help of mother and sister and all-revealing slides and tape-recordings, humiliates the victims beyond endurance, and, in the case of the present victim, Clarence, to the point of suicide. All of which makes for wonderful family fun. The idea is that these three incubi and succubi are infinitely appealing despite their ghoulishness or even because of it; that the so-called normal people in the play are represented as paralyzed or insensate, living in the past or escaping into sleep, doomed to extinction of one kind or another; that even among the inverts, the "nice" ones die because they can't take it; that the monsters shall endure and inherit the earth.

However, even the obnoxiousness of this premise might be made tolerable if the insights or at least the language were interesting. But no, it is all campy trivialities couched in poeticizing baby-talk (with camp refrains like "Sssh, *caro,* sssh; double-sssh, *caro,* double-sssh" repeated *ad nauseam*) intertwined with sadistic bitchery, as in this exchange between the ex-operatic diva mother and her son: "*Sigfrid:* Well, your bazooms have dropped! *Ruby:* Of course, there's no one I especially want to keep them up for . . . But aside from my fallen grapes, how do I look? *Sigfrid:* . . . I wish you'd slip on the Valkyrie outfit with the cast-iron boobies—they always make you look so feminine."

And that whole long scene in which endless fun is squeezed from the fact that poor Clarence is forced to wear nothing but a dress: they stole his clothes, and there he is, barefoot in a frock, the poor, gangly, likable, naive, idealistic, uneffeminate queer. And the hearty *double-entendres* on words like "queen" and "basket." And the poetic outbursts, like twelve-year-old daughter Lakme's, "Dead is bad, Ruby! Why didn't you tell us how bad dead was?" And son Sigfrid's funda-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

mentalist *de profundis,* "I buggered him! I buggered him good! And we can't have buggered saints!" It fair makes one long for the Albertine strategy again. Come back, Albertine, all is forgiven! For it would seem, on the evidence of this play and certain others related to it, that the homosexual theatre cannot as yet be merely homosexual: it has to wallow in every kind of nastiness, exhibitionism, vulgarity, and destruction. It is not the homosexuality that offends, but all that hysterical ugliness that seems to be its Siamese twin.[3]

Of the four musicals I can report on, *I Had a Ball* can be summed up with the melancholy comment that it depends entirely on Buddy Hackett's interpolating a semi-improvised nightclub act right at the beginning; after that, the audience laughs in retrospect or on credit. *Baker Street* is, at least, opulent, and people who can settle for opulence plus an occasional bit of choreographic whimsy or mild sight-gag may find something to latch on to. The performers, most of them miscast, are overshadowed by Oliver Smith's nimbly metamorphosing sets and Bil Baird's charming, and properly cast, marionettes. The music and lyrics are negligible, and the book—well, there is a big laugh-line in which Sherlock Holmes's landlady laments that "he has been given the O. M. posthumorously"; the book, then, is posthumorous and prehumorous.

Do I Hear a Waltz? is more of a disappointment. Richard Rodgers, Stephen Sondheim, and the stunning English director, John Dexter—from these, I expected more. From Arthur Laurents and his book, based on his play *The Time of the Cuckoo,* I expected nothing and got exactly that. Brilliant a designer as Beni Montresor is, and shimmeringly lovely as his Venice may be (it is, in fact, rather more gossamer than the real thing), the one thing he could not put on stage was water. So it went into the book instead. Sondheim is not the lyricist for Rodgers, or Rodgers the composer for Sondheim, but three songs manage to improve on the current Broadway fare (though that is not saying much); they are "Moon in My Window," "We're Gonna Be All Right" and "Perfectly Lovely Couple," for the last of which Herbert Ross has devised some lovable dancing, unusual for this specialist in the exotic and bizarre. He and Dexter have also done well with the movements for an amusing little number, "No Understand." As for the performances, they are almost all pleasant, though Sergio Franchi lacks charm desperately, and Julienne Marie oozes too much of it, all of it phoney. Christopher Votos is an engaging urchin (note that this is a rare achievement for America, where child actors tend to be fit only for the Tarpeian Rock) and Stuart Damon does the best work of the evening in what, without his polish, might have been

[3] Just for the record, the production, too, and especially Michael Cacoyannis's untalented direction, failed miserably. Only Ed Wittstein's lugubrious set and Marco St. John's touching Clarence could pass muster. And, as always, Jules Fisher's masterly lighting.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

just another routine *ingénu* role. Altogether, there is something tired and autumnal about this show, about everything in it except the leading lady, who should be middle-aged and plain, but, to the detriment of probability and meaningfulness, is played by someone young and good-looking.

The surprise of the late season is *Half a Sixpence,* a British musical somewhat spruced up for America, still low-keyed and old-fashioned, but, since *Fiddler on the Roof,* the best we've got. H. G. Wells's *Kipps* supplied Beverley Cross with an amiable and graciously patinated libretto; David Heneker's lyrics are a bit worn, but his tunes (except for some soggy ballads) are quite enjoyable. Robert Prince has arranged, and, in one instance, even composed some splendidly bumptious dance music, and Onna White's choreography manages to *be* what all choreographies are flattered into believing they are: infectious. Under Gene Saks's neat direction, Tommy Steele (who would have thought the young man had so much charm in him?), Polly James and James Grout perform with absolute rightness; Carrie Nye, not being English, is at a disadvantage, but contributes a diverting parody of Joan Greenwood. In smaller parts, the funniness of Norman Allen and the agility of Grover Dale are to be especially commended. Like Loudon Sainthill's sets and costumes, *Half a Sixpence* tends toward the tried and mellow rather than toward the daring and different; but, on its chosen ground, it holds up stoutly and affably to the end.

Lastly, three plays. Ulu Grosbard has revived Arthur Miller's *A View From the Bridge* off Broadway, and staged it conscientiously and effectively with an essentially capable cast. But the play remains as confused and dishonest as ever. Neil Simon has followed up *Barefoot in the Park* with *The Odd Couple,* another farce that may well run forever. I find it less good; nothing much more than a joke-book tossed up on the stage. Some of the jokes are amusing, most of the acting and staging is as cleverly efficient as can be, but the plot is too specious even for farce, and the characters are militantly nonexistent. James Baldwin's thirteen-year-old *The Amen Corner* amounts to a lengthy, seemingly interminable, anti-sermon on sex and fun being better than religion, that opiate of the black people. The characters are stereotypes (heaven help the *white* playwright who today would dare to create these Negroes), and the writing generally indifferent and far, far too copious. The whole thing is as static as a Händel opera, but a certain amount of gospel singing does not yet take it out of the play category. Bea Richards does more than gallantly by a thankless role; the others range from fair to amateurish. Frank Silvera, who also directed (poorly), is light-skinned enough to play either white or, as here, Negro parts. That gives him the unique distinction of being one of our worst black as well as one of our worst white actors.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

STEPHEN TAYLOR

The Red Desert: Neurosis à la Mode

A JOKE POPULAR ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES about eight years ago has to do with a man whose existence seems one day so empty of purpose that he is moved to renounce all his worldly ambitions and instead go in search of the meaning of life. After lengthy and arduous travels—an account of them would try the patience of even the shaggiest of dogs—his quest ends at the feet of an ageless Himalayan guru, who has been contemplating the problem in question for many lonely decades. By now half dead with exhaustion, the man repeatedly queries the guru, and finally, thoughtfully, confidently, the guru says: "Life . . . is a fountain." Hearing the pronouncement and able to perceive nothing but inanity in it, the man becomes so dazed with rage that he spends himself haranguing the poor guru, who looks at the man and asks in a voice quavering with uncertainty: "You mean . . . it's *not* a fountain?"

I have no idea of the original source of the joke, but whoever invented it did a neat job of spoofing what Saul Bellow calls our "weakness for metaphor." It is a weakness that nearly all of us share in some degree, and what is weak about it concerns the temptation to credit a good metaphor with an excess of veracity. Possibly the joke is a natural measure of this weakness: the quality of our response to it would seem to be more than accidentally related to our willingness to go along with the Keatsian identity of truth and beauty. Meanwhile, the twentieth century (a handful of romantic diehards notwithstanding) has seen Keats's equation give way to a growing insistence upon distinction. And then, just as we were gaining confidence in our immunity to aesthetic hypnosis, along came Michelangelo Antonioni, complete with an eerily beguiling world-view and mastery of the most mesmerizing art form we have as yet evolved, to demonstrate just how exiguous our progress has really been. *The Red Desert,* Antonioni's latest film, is the best example of this syndrome that he has furnished to date. Its rather limited veracity is so far surpassed by the beauty of its images and the ingenuity of its pictorial metaphors that, even more than with the films of the *L'Avventura* trilogy, we find that as we appreciate it we are being inveigled into believing it.

The opening sequence of *The Red Desert* is a case in point. In it, the film's main character, Giuliana (Monica Vitti), walks with her small son past a factory outside which a group of strikers are gathered. The day is gray and overcast, and we have just been shown a tall factory smokestack intermittently coughing up bursts of fragile yellow

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

flame. Looking somehow overwrought, Giuliana approaches one of the strikers, buys a sandwich that he has already begun munching, overpays him, retreats to a clump of trees, wolfs down part of the sandwich as if hunger were in no way connected with her desire to eat, and finally relaxes a little. Then, with something more like compulsion than curiosity, she surveys the land adjoining the factory, most of which is covered with murky, smoking refuse. The camera, now substituting for her own vision, pans and pokes around in the debris for a few seconds, and the sequence of images concludes with a painstakingly composed long shot of the countryside as a whole. Below the horizon, which bisects the frame, is an expanse of smouldering rubbish; above it is a string of smoking factories. Visually, if only because the scattered bits of color in this overwhelmingly gray landscape seem to glow with new and special nuances, the juxtaposition is a beautiful one. But if, either consciously or subliminally, we are being asked to do a rather prettified set of lessons (with two and two, i.e. smoking factories and smoking debris, spelled out for us so that regardless of the metaphor's details—we can add, multiply, or raise one to the power of the other—the result stubbornly remains four), we have every right to fault the course of study for simplemindedness.

Other images in *The Red Desert* betray this propensity of Antonioni's to conceal proselytic purposes in visual lushness. Giuliana goes with her husband Ugo (Carlo Chionetti) and his friend Corrado (Richard Harris) to a country shack where they are to spend the day with some acquaintances. As usual a chill gray mist pervades. After some desultory talk Giuliana walks a little way into the woods and stops to look at the trees, the nearer ones forming an irregular lattice through which the more distant ones can be seen vanishing into the fog. Then, just as we realize that for the first time in the film we are being afforded a view of landscape unsullied by cars or radio antennae or telephone poles or factory buildings or any of the human artifacts that in Antonioni are perpetually crowding out natural objects, the prow of an enormous ship appears suddenly on the left and proceeds silently across the woods, blotting out the sky and trees behind it until its hull becomes a backdrop against which the trees in the foreground seem no more real than stage props. It is the network of canals winding through the vicinity of Ravenna, where the film was shot, that permitted so gorgeous a vision of the implacability with which our creations pursue us, but amid cascades of lesser images carrying much the same message even the most sumptuous ones are hard put to escape something of a touch of banality.

And of patently second rate images, unredeemed either by beauty or simple novelty, there is an abundance comparable to none of Antonioni's earlier films. The assault upon Giuliana's sanity by the forces of mechanization, for instance, is particularized by such devices as having her be awakened from a bad dream by noises from her son's

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

toy robot, which, after being mysteriously activated, has started bumping aimlessly around the boy's room. Then, as if to underline what has already been italicized, Giuliana's husband appears, the lights are turned on, and while he tries more or less vainly to comfort her we see an apartment so ridiculously "hard-edged" that it looks like the back hallway of a modern steel plant. Nor does the aforementioned country shack provide much in the way of relief. Not only has the land near it been spoiled, but a patchy scum of industrial wastes coats the surface of the water; the host for the afternoon has had to furnish store-bought fish for dinner because the locally caught eels, as someone remarks, taste of crude oil. Once inside the shack, a scene reminiscent of Antonioni's better days is reasonably well played. A group of upper echelon industrial personnel and related types (here Paul Goodman's distinction between people and personnel applies directly) use a fatuous discussion of aphrodisiacs to titillate themselves into a post-prandial orgy not of sex but of incipient sex. But the scene has been preceded by so many rank allusions to the unstoppable spread of industrial blight that its effect is largely vitiated. When everyone finally leaves for home we almost expect a crash-landing satellite to swoop out of the sky and annihilate the cabin.

The same strain of banality extends to Giuliana's ostensible neurosis. Like many other casualties of the growth of automation she understandably suffers from a painful sense of superfluousness. That her own special circumstances might bring about occasional intensifications of these feelings, with the result that she sporadically falls victim to "attacks," is also perfectly credible. But to denote the onset of these attacks with a shrill electronic whine on the soundtrack—the same facile whine that post-Freudian Hollywood established as a means to telegraph the fact that things are psychically not what they ought to be—is to revert to just that depleted old cinematic language that Antonioni is otherwise so fastidious in avoiding. Even the gray spells that come on in the immediate aftermath of Giuliana's attacks —in one case a fruitstand is seen to be tiered with uniformly gray fruit, in another Corrado's hotel room, after she has slept with him, is a gray enclosure containing only gray objects—seem, despite the novelty of the device, less descriptors of Giuliana's internal condition than concessions to an avowed desire to *use* color rather than merely decorate with it. The experiment is interesting enough, but ultimately this gray shroud communicates no more about anyone's mental state than does the more conventional "whine-in-the-brain" technique.

All the same, the great profusion of related images in *The Red Desert* betray what, on Antonioni's part, must have been an undertaking conducted in deadly earnest. If any single subject can be isolated both in terms of its supreme importance and its comparative neglect by serious cinema it is the subject of work, and Antonioni must be cited not only for having grappled with the problem but for

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

having employed a highly unconventional set of tactics in doing so. Most unconventional, perhaps, was his decision to be almost wilfully indirect: he concentrates on a character (Giuliana) who is totally bereft of all useful work, whose function as measured against the needs of her family and friends and super-mechanized environment has come to be so nebulous as almost to render her obsolete. *The Red Desert* is not, as some critics have suggested, just another version of the same old alienation story. True enough, the next to last scene —in which Giuliana wanders up the gangplank of a freighter, encounters a Turkish sailor who speaks no Italian, and desperately gropes for words in trying to tell him how she feels when we all know that the *mot juste* she seeks is "alienation"—is awkward, heavy handed, derivative (maybe unintentionally) of Ingmar Bergman, and a near travesty of all "failure of communication" scenes. But for the most part the alienation in the film is not flaunted before us simply as a disembodied bugbear; it is visibly an outgrowth of the larger phenomenon of human obsolescence, a phenomenon to which even Ugo, whose work as an electronics engineer consists not of making but of maintenance, is prey. With his relationship to his son, so far as we can see, confined to giving patient instruction in arithmetic and the fine points of using a microscope set or toy gyroscope, and that to his wife limited to a gentle, antiseptic, uncomprehending automatism, Ugo is already little more than a quantum of machine fodder, likely as not to be supplanted or left behind by some future increment of progress in technology.

Antonioni's Ravenna, then, is a far cry from the sooty industrial environments with which a handful of British film makers (Clayton, Reisz, Richardson, Anderson, Schlesinger) carried on a flirtation in the late fifties and early sixties. Work as conducted in the strangely photogenic midlands cities to which these directors went for their location shooting, was portrayed mainly in Dickensian terms, replete with exploitation, filth, poor housing, suppressed sexuality, class barriers, ignorance, and gross brutalization. Cumulatively, however, the ill-disguised missionary quality of these films interfered with their power of revelation. Addressing themselves to social inequities in the British industrial structure, they focused so determinedly on atavisms and anachronisms that we learned little more about the nature of work in the mid-twentieth century than can be gleaned by reading *David Copperfield.*

What makes Antonioni's approach so fundamentally different from the English one is his twofold desire to be scrupulously up-to-date and to stress revelation at the expense of correction. His up-to-dateness is reflected in his portrait of an industry whose underpinnings are still firmly rooted in the profit motive but whose image is now cosmeticized with paternalism, progressivism, and that impersonal concern for the welfare of its personnel which reduces benevolence to one more aspect

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of double entry bookeeping. His waiving a reformist stance, on the other hand, consistent as it may be with his usual coolness, is almost certainly in part dictated by the nature of his subject: the forms of industry spawned by today's huge corporate enterprises are heavily permeated with a new brand of amorality that makes "reform" seem embarrassingly fatuous, and subordinates mere matters of right and wrong to the greater exigencies of a "production" and "efficiency" that have outgrown their use as measures of palpable goods or profit and attained to the status of self-sufficient concepts. These are the facts to which Giuliana is unable to adjust and in defiance of which she plans to open a ceramics shop—if only to ward off all this enveloping nebulosity with a little down-to-earth reality (although, in an atmosphere that rapidly transforms mundane activity into therapy, her chances for success are just about nil).

Yet, apart from his almost too-insistent modernism, there is something acutely unsatisfactory about Antonioni's film. One senses that something is being avoided, that some crucial confrontation has been omitted for reasons that a possible taste on the part of the director for offstage climaxes does not sufficiently explain. (The superbly photographed scene in which Giuliana is ravished by Corrado carries the film to a point of maximum tension, but it is no climax; far from changing anything it only confirms Giuliana's—and Corrado's—inaccessibility.) This sense of omission becomes apparent on first noticing that Antonioni regularly exits from his scenes and from sequences within scenes by cutting or panning away from the characters to some facet of their surroundings. Used sparingly such a technique can be revealing, but it becomes irksome when time after time, just as a conversation or series of actions appears to be acquiring real pertinence, one is left dangling while the camera goes off to climb and swoop around the pipeline patterns of an oil refinery, or study a factory's steam discharges, or peer at the walls and furniture of interiors that all resemble hospital rooms, or simply stare at a picturesquely overcast sky sucking cosmic lungfuls of poisonous vapor out of a limitless vista of smokestacks. That the environment suggested by this collection of images is in fact encroaching upon natural landscape and even people is irrefutable; it is just that, as these human beings dissolve into their environment, the urgency of their problems starts dissolving with them. The world evoked by Antonioni is one in which human beings have ceded nearly perfect equality to man-made objects and artifacts. It is a world in which people and objects have equal rights to habitation, to attention, and to consideration. Only the objects press their claims more strongly than do the people, which latter, in resisting, end up competing on terms laid down by objects. But these terms, because they are the only clearly valuable attributes that objects can possess, are utility and beauty, and at the point where Antonioni makes his entrance human beings have already

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

yielded to objects on the grounds of utility and are about to lose their foothold in the domain of beauty as well. There is genuine poignancy in this vision but it is not a new one. We have for years been able to witness the subjugation of human beings by objects—in which human values have been set aside and people have so well mastered the glaciality and neutrality of objects that they can imitate them almost to perfection—in the pages of fashion magazines. The psychology and even the sheer *look* of this film call to mind the fashion spreads in *Vogue* and *Bazaar,* and it is less to belittle the film than to be aware of its limitations that we must take note of the fact. The world of *The Red Desert* is largely the world of chic.

It is doubtful that Antonioni planned this. He says in the October '64 *Cahiers du Cinéma*: "[*The Red Desert*] is the least autobiographical of my films. It is, moreover, one in which I have maintained a viewpoint turned toward the exterior." Which is by itself a legitimate enough aspiration. Exteriors and surfaces can be highly communicative, and no medium is more amply suited to foster this kind of communication than film. But repeatedly Antonioni turns from scruffy and potentially revealing surfaces to beautiful and glib ones, and it is just this preference that constitutes the ethos of chic. Chic, after all, is quintessentially un-Keatsian; it is the dislodgement of truth from beauty, even the replacement of truth by beauty. In the ethos of chic, truth and falsity are two among the many raw materials on which beauty may draw; satin, perfume, money and poise are four others.

But chic has a horror of crucial confrontations, which are apt to be awkward and embarrassing. Something might get spilled or soiled or broken. Thus, even granting that *The Red Desert*'s characters have achieved so advanced a state of civilization that they no longer confront one another, we are spared a glimpse of the still more important confrontation between these people and the environment that has left them so desolate. Whether or not they are happy with their desolation is beside the point. Indeed, we are led to believe that those who have adjusted easily are quite happy. It is only that with so much footage devoted to panoramic views of industrial structures that look somehow smug, complacent, and victorious on the one hand, and human beings that seem to the last man a race of slaves on the other, we are still in the dark as to what exactly has been perpetrated. It is here that *The Red Desert* fails as a work film. Its premises are substantially correct, and any telling work film would have to start out with similar ones. But premises are really all it has. To go deeper would have involved details from which Antonioni seems bent on keeping an irritatingly polite distance. Just as we want fresh details he begins to restate old ones. Just as we want a closer look at what is happening he draws back into long shots, generalities, reconnaissance. There is nothing wrong with reconnaissance as a means to establish the atmosphere of a film, but for it to compose a film in its entirety is

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

maddening. Having got the general picture we then want to move on in, and this Antonioni refuses to do.

Falling short of distinction in its treatment of work (the two recent films of most distinction in that category are, to my mind, Ernanno Olmi's *The Sound of Trumpets* [*Il Posto*] and *The Fiancés;* Olmi's qualifications include years of making industrial documentaries, whereas Antonioni has to rely too heavily on sensibility alone), *The Red Desert* remains to be considered as a series of episodes in the life of a neurotic. As such it has some notable virtues. It is just about entirely free of Freudian sex-trauma imagery (somehow the smokestacks and antennae discourage a fruitful phallus hunt), and consequently declines to pander to our secret vocation as lay analysts. And, even better, it makes no open bid for our compassion. If we pity Giuliana we must do it on our own; no one else asks us to. Also to be commended is Monica Vitti's performance. Her earlier roles, which called mostly for one or another kind of resignation—to the imperfections of a love affair in *L'Avventura,* to a generalized disenchantment in *The Eclipse*—demanded that she either sulk or merely react. In *The Red Desert* she is required to care, even to the point of desperation, and she does so with complete plausibility.

Still, the plausibility of the film in its entirety is flawed, and it is Antonioni himself who must take the blame. In the *Cahiers du Cinéma* statement cited earlier, he plays down any ramifications his film may have beyond its being an account of a neurotic's travails and then goes on to emphasize the exteriority of its point of view: "I have told a story as though I have seen it unfold before my eyes." But in fact it is Giuliana's eyes through which most of the action (and inaction) is viewed. Nothing else explains the selectivity with which *The Red Desert*'s images have been chosen. For one thing, all the characters seem to have been gathered for the express purpose of exuding either soullessness or menace or both. For another, the staring, wandering, often intentionally out-of-focus camera work inescapably suggests a vision, alternately paranoiac and catatonic, that can be Giuliana's alone. And the gray spells make no sense if they are not symptoms of Giuliana's malaise. They are gimmicky enough in that context; in any other the device would be disastrous.

What *The Red Desert* finally lacks is one good image that could rescue the character of Giuliana from this haze of emergent generalities and establish it as something definitive. I am thinking of moments like the one in Fritz Lang's *M* in which Peter Lorre is seen through a hedgerow outside a café: he nervously orders a drink, changes his order as soon as he makes it, breathes rapidly, then more rapidly, then pants, then, just as he seems about to burst in a fit of gasping, begins frantically to whistle a theme from the "Peer Gynt Suite," then, slowly, his demons having somehow been assuaged, subsides. Whether this is a view from inside or outside is less important than the fact

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that in a few seconds Lang tell us more about Lorre's aberration than Antonioni, in two hours of groping through the industrial labyrinth at Ravenna, tells us about Giuliana's. Every time some meaning seems about to coalesce, Antonioni engulfs it in a splash of gorgeous cinematography. That gorgeous cinematography used in excess can reduce all else to decoration is its major pitfall, and Antonioni at his worst—a state in which *The Red Desert* often finds him—is just this sort of decorator. Too frequently, when he employs Giuliana's neuroses as so many aesthetic ingredients of a pictorial composition, we are reminded of the college girls to whom a few neuroses are as indispensable as a pair of sandals and a year in Paris. Certain aberrations do indeed have a strange fascination for us, but it is hard not to believe that Antonioni was aiming at something more.

B. H. HAGGIN

Music and Ballet Chronicle

THE FIRST OF THE NEW WORKS of the New York City Ballet's winter season was Balanchine's *Pas de Deux and Divertissement,* which framed part of the earlier *Sylvia Pas de Deux* with new dances by a group of girls headed by a soloist, converting it into another of the elaborate show pieces like *Raymonda Variations* that Balanchine has done occasionally in recent years. The new material was charming and made effective use of Suki Schorer's delightful style of sharply precise small-scale movement. And Karinska's costumes for the girls—with their bright red bodices and delicately colored skirts and underskirts—added another to her many extraordinary achievements. The principal roles were danced effectively at the premiere by Melissa Hayden and André Prokovsky; and some later performances offered the excitingly beautiful dancing of Suzanne Farrell or Allegra Kent.

The second new work, Taras's *Shadow'd Ground,* presented a series of episodes evoked by the epitaphs in a graveyard. The music, Copland's *Dance Panels,* seemed to me not to justify its title; the movements devised to go with it I found weak and uninteresting; and the scenic production distracted the eye with four large panels on which were projected a succession of colored photographs.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In the final new work, Balanchine's *Harlequinade*—derived from the ballet *Les Millions d'Arlequin* that he saw as a child, and using its music by Drigo—his powers of dance invention operated in the service of his superb sense for the theater, and in this instance for comedy. The number for the drunken police patrol, and what was presented to the eye—in costume, make-up and movement—as the character of Léandre, were only two high points in the entertaining progression of dance and pantomime contrived, as always, in terms of the particular capacities and styles of the dancers—not only of Edward Villella and Patricia McBride, the Harlequin and Colombine, but of Deni Lamont and Suki Schorer, the Pierrot and Pierrette—in the frame of Rouben Ter-Arutunian's amusing scenery.

As important as the new works was the return of Balanchine's *Liebesliederwalzer*. Seen after an interval of two years, its inexhaustible flow of constantly varied invention for one piece of music after another in the one basic rhythm and style—now with the touching implications of a romantic episode, now with powerful dramatic implications—had an increased impressiveness that placed the work, for me, with his major achievements. When it was first done, Violette Verdy's was the outstanding performance; and this time her coaching was evident in the images of her clarity, elegance and distinction that one saw in Sara Leland's excellent performance of the same role. On the other hand Suzanne Farrell made no attempt to reproduce Diana Adams's cool, aloof performance; instead, with her own inflections of arms and hands, and her expressiveness, she created an entirely new character—youthfully warm, impulsive, touching—in excitingly beautiful dancing that was outstanding in these performances as Verdy's had been in the first ones. Farrell's partner, Kent Stowell, didn't achieve in his solos the superb style in large movement that Bill Carter had exhibited; but James DeBolt was an effective replacement for Jonathan Watts. The others—McBride, Jillana, Nicholas Magallanes and Conrad Ludlow—repeated their excellent contributions to the early performances.

In addition a performance of *Scotch Symphony* had Farrell, in the second movement, again creating a different character—youthfully impulsive, capricious, even playful, and utterly captivating—from the grandly romantic ones created by her predecessors. A performance of *Serenade* had Mimi Paul operating with her strength and authority in her beautifully fluid style. And several other young dancers—Carol Sumner, Victoria Simon, Patricia Neary and Suki Schorer—demonstrated their technical and stylistic adequacy for the difficult roles they took on in *Divertimento No. 15*.

With the exciting experiences provided by these young dancers there were the ones offered by Allegra Kent, whose return to the company enabled one to confirm one's recollection of the exquisite flow of her movements in *Serenade* and the second movement of *Symphony*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in C, her additional projective force in *La Sonnambula,* the quiet power of her slowly and securely executed delicate movements in *Bugaku* (and her return to this piece brought Villella back to it, to confirm my recollection of the superb effect of his quiet and contained exercise of strength, as against the destructive effect of Arthur Mitchell's fussing and hamming). But one thing, it turned out, I had not remembered as I should have: the overwhelming beauty and dramatic expressiveness of Kent's performance in *Swan Lake.*

Like its earlier new *Lucia,* the Metropolitan's new *Salome*—designed by Rudolf Heinrich in collaboration with Günther Rennert who directed it—is an example of the tendency of present-day designer-director teams to concern themselves with big ideas that never entered the composer's mind, and that result in neglect or inept dealing with the requirements of the actual work. An interviewer of Heinrich reported his agreement with Rennert that "the period represented in *Salome* was one in which the world changed (from Augustus to Christ)"; the focussing, by their expressionistic solution, of this "world change upon the back yard of Herod's palace—'the only place a dangerous prisoner would be kept locked up in a cistern,' the designer observes"; the suggestion, by "the passage of the huge, carbuncular moon," of "not only the decline of Jochanaan's fortunes but the moment of transition from a pagan to a Christian era." And Salome, "whom Heinrich sees as a confused but intelligent girl ahead of her time, is covered from head to toe as a protest against the licentious goings-on around her." I doubt that Strauss was concerned with any of this or would be impressed by it; and I am sure he would object to the mishandling of important details of what he *was* concerned with. Whether the banquet hall of Herod's palace faces the back yard or, as seems more probable, the large terrace that Strauss specifies, it is absurd to have Narraboth, as he looks through the palace door, exclaim that Salome has arisen, that she is leaving the banquet, that she is coming toward them, and then, while he is still looking at her through the doorway, to have her appear not in the doorway but on a ramp behind the palace. And where the dramatic point of Narraboth's killing himself is that it is done before the eyes of Salome which—fixed on Jochanaan—do not see it, that point isn't made when Narraboth kills himself some distance away from her. The idea of the back yard may account for the clutter of platforms and steps that impeded the action and made it unclear. But even the ideas don't explain the net that hung over the stage, the net worn by Jochanaan, the over-all net motif on Herod's costume—not only strange but incongruous with the gaudy get-up of Herodias and what was in effect the black teagown of Salome.

What Birgit Nilsson accomplished in the title role I cannot report; but I can guess that her powerful, steady voice was more impressive

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

than the tremulous and not very strong one of Maria Kouba, who in addition exhibited only moderate powers as an actress, and only a singing actress's powers as a dancer. The others—Karl Liebl as Herod, Irene Dalis as Herodias, Walter Cassel as Jochanaan—were better singers and actors; and Böhm's authoritative conducting produced a well-paced and clear-textured realization of the score—too clear for Strauss's own good, since it enabled one to hear how poor, how tasteless, how awful the musical results were of this enormously accomplished composer's facile manipulation of enormously complex means.

When Shostakovitch's opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* was first given in New York in 1935 I noted the contradiction between Russian esthetic theory and artistic fact. The theory expressed scorn for the distorted Western music that it considered to be the artistic manifestation of decay and disillusionment in Western capitalist society, and contended that only the new socialist society in Russia provided the possibilities of faith and affirmation that constituted the conditions of a healthy art; but the fact was the distorted, jeering, grimacing music of Shostakovitch, who had grown to maturity in that new society. But I noted also the stylistic contradictions in the work itself: first the contradiction between the drama, which though brutal was completely serious, and the sardonically jeering music to which much of it was set; and the further contradiction between this music and the occasional serious music—with the result that the work oscillated between taking the characters and their actions seriously and ridiculing them. And these stylistic contradictions remain in the somewhat revised version of the work, now called *Katerina Ismailovna,* which the New York City Opera presented in its spring season. The undistorted lyricism of a lament by the unhappy Katerina takes her unhappiness seriously; but more often the music jeers at what it deals with. As for the quality of the music, in this early work, as in later ones, Shostakovitch operates with a resourceful fluency that for many people is enough to make him an important composer; but it is a resourceful fluency in writing that is not original—whether it is the undistorted lyricism of Katerina's lament, or the jeering and grimacing in which I hear a reworking of some of Prokofiev's writing by as low-grade and vulgar a mind and taste as has ever communicated itself to me through an artistic medium. Political pressures didn't turn a good composer into a bad one: the music was bad from the start, and political pressures merely made it worse with the required bombastic affirmations of the later works.

The production had good scenery by Will Steven Armstrong, good direction by Frank Corsaro and effective conducting by Julius Rudel; but its major asset was a new singer, Eileen Schauler, who brought to the title role a remarkably beautiful voice and impressive dramatic competence. Its fatal flaw was that the work was sung in English—

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

fatal because it caused the audience to laugh at some of the English words where it would not have laughed at the Russian ones.

Even worse than foreign opera in English is the Offenbach or Johann Strauss operetta in English that both Rudolf Bing and Mr. Rudel have put on. These foreign operettas are no more the proper business of an American opera company than the musicals of Gershwin and Cole Porter; and the Barrault production of *La Vie Parisienne* a year ago supported my additional contention that Offenbach and Johann Strauss exercise their charm only when performed in their original languages by companies at home in their styles, and lose all savor in the English adaptations with American singers that have been given at the Metropolitan and City Center. And Mr. Rudel, after putting on a ghastly production of *Die Fledermaus* in English last fall, now demonstrated how wrong he had been to do so by putting on the Brecht-Weill *Dreigroschenoper* in German and with German actors. The word *Oper* in the title doesn't make the work an opera: it is a play with occasional songs, a theater piece, which is not in the repertories even of German opera companies, and was not a work for the New York City Opera to produce. But at least the company, for once, produced such a work in the right way, so that it had the authenticity which only the German language and German actors could give it. And though some expert opinion considered the production poor, for me the direction of Adolph Rott, the acting of Kurt Kasznar, Stefan Schnabel, Lilia Skala, Anita Hoefer, Marion Brash, Ralph Herbert and the others, and the scenery and costumes of Wolfgang Roth and Ruth Morley worked effectively.

The new American opera this time, Jack Beeson's *Lizzie Borden,* turned out to be yet another in the succession of works produced by the company in which the audience's attention is held by an interesting play whose words, instead of being spoken, are sung to musical sounds that don't satisfy the first requirement of any musical writing, namely that it have intrinsic musical value, or the additional requirement of operatic writing, namely that it have expressive force which heightens the effect of the words—these vocal sounds, moreover, in a context of similarly valueless orchestral sounds.

Though the music of Rameau's opera *Castor et Pollux* is very different from that of Donizetti's *Maria Stuarda,* it too—if it is to have validity and effect for the listener—requires the sensitive shaping and articulating of its phrases that Thomas Scherman didn't give it in his Concert Opera Association performance. Moreover its many dance episodes make it, by Mr. Scherman's own announced criterion, not a work for concert performance; and certainly its requirements were not adequately met by the inane movements of a little group of dancers on the right side of the stage of Philharmonic Hall, with the orchestra in the middle and the singers on the left.

Tchaikovsky's music is robust enough to preserve its character and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

exercise its effect in spite of what even better conductors than Mr. Scherman have done to it; and the writing that Tchaikovsky's fully matured powers achieved in *Pique Dame* overwhelmed one by its beauty and expressive power in spite of the disturbingly inadequate singing of the Russian soprano Tamara Milashkina as Lisa and the at times painful singing of the tenor William Lewis as Herman. Having said this, I must mention the good singing of John Reardon as Yeletsky and Russell Christopher as Tomsky, and the outstanding achievement of Jennie Tourel in the two roles of Pauline and the Countess—not only her singing but her remarkable dramatic performance of the Countess being frightened to death by Herman. And I must mention how much the experience of the work gained from hearing the music sung in Russian, which the Americans in the cast had been able to learn to pronounce adequately. I shudder at the thought of the music with the English words of the Metropolitan's production next year.

Pique Dame has been performed before in New York in my lifetime; but I had to wait fifty years for a performance which enabled me to hear what superb writing Berlioz put into his opera *Benvenuto Cellini*. This too proved to be a work that could come through Mr. Scherman's conducting; but in addition it had the benefit of Nicolai Gedda's superb vocal (and dramatic) performance in the title role. I cannot think of another tenor today with the range and power of voice and the musical style that produced Gedda's stunning delivery of Cellini's third-act aria. And there was also beautiful singing by Helen Vanni as Ascanio and good singing by most of the others.

In addition to presenting its own International Festival of Visiting Orchestras, Carnegie Hall co-operated in the presentation of the Berlin Philharmonic and von Karajan in a Beethoven festival. Such a series offering the nine symphonies and a few other works performed by a distinguished foreign orchestra under an eminent foreign conductor is analogous to a special exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of a group of Rembrandts from foreign museums. But the analogy is not complete: we experience the Rembrandts directly from what Rembrandt himself put on the canvasses; whereas we experience Beethoven's works in the objects in sound produced by the conductor with his orchestra—objects which in some instances give us the impression of being accurate and effective realizations of what Beethoven imagined, and in some instances do not give us this impression. And objects of both kinds were produced at the five concerts of this festival.

An orchestra plays as it is conducted; and von Karajan is one of the possessors of what Bernard Shaw described as the conductor's highest faculty—the ability to establish "a magnetic influence under which an orchestra becomes as amenable to the *bâton* as a pianoforte to the fingers." But there were times in these Beethoven performances when von Karajan seemed not to be exercising this magnetic influence. In a Toscanini performance what one saw him do was related at every

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

point to the orchestra's playing; and his point-to-point delineation of the performance with his movements was the visible manifestation of his point-to-point contact with, attention to, and control of the progression in sound, which produced a never-ceasing continuity of tension in the progression. But much of the time the Berlin Philharmonic's playing had no relation to von Karajan's circular arm movements in front of his body, which not only didn't delineate the course of the musical progression but didn't even conform to the beats of the measure, and which the orchestra had to ignore if it was to produce a correct statement of the music. And at such times, when the orchestra in effect played on its own, reproducing what had been worked out at rehearsal, its playing was nerveless, slack, without the cohesive tension a conductor has to impart to it. Moreover, the dull, heavy orchestral sound at the first two concerts was evidence that von Karajan wasn't exercising the control Toscanini exercised to achieve the orchestral balance that produces beautiful orchestral sound; nor did one hear at these two concerts the clarity of texture Toscanini also achieved with his balancing of the orchestra; and an oboe phrase in the *Eroica* was merely audible, instead of having the carefully and precisely inflected contour and the carefully and precisely calculated relation to everything else at that point that one heard in the Toscanini performance. All these began as matters of orchestral execution, but became matters of musical performance that were included in the shaping of the music by tempo and dynamics; and this shaping exhibited defects which represented errors of musical judgment and taste: the ponderously slow pace of the *Coriolan* Overture; the excessively fast tempos of the *Pastoral* Symphony; the slowing down, in the Allegretto of the Seventh, of the alternating section in major, and consequently of the movement's basic rhythm that should continue unchanged throughout; the slowing down of the bassoon statement in the coda of the finale of the Fifth, which destroyed the movement's momentum; the slowing down of the episode for basses and oboe beginning at bar 77 of the exposition and bar 230 of the recapitulation in the first movement of the First; the slowing down after the second proclamatory passage in the coda of the slow movement of the Ninth; the retardation, ending in a *Luftpause,* of the cello passage that should flow straight into bar 69 of the slow movement of the Fourth.

It was not until the third concert, in the *Pastoral,* that one heard beautiful orchestral sound. And it was not until the last two concerts that one heard the musically distinguished performances of the series. The first of these offered a beautifully conceived and achieved Eighth, and the Piano Concerto No. 3 with fine playing by Hans Richter-Haaser. And at the final concert von Karajan was clearly in contact with the orchestra at every moment of the relaxed, unhurried and well-shaped (except for the episode in the first movement) First, and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the powerfully and coherently shaped (except for the coda of the slow movement) Ninth.

Carnegie Hall's other festival gave me my first hearing of the Hague Philharmonic and van Otterloo in a hall. Their performances of Berlioz's *Fantastique* and Mahler's Fourth on records had been excellent; but the poorly chosen works they played at the concert—Pijper's Third Symphony, Bartók's Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta, Franck's *Psyché* and Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloé* Suite—didn't call into play the conductor's musical powers that had impressed me; and though the orchestra achieved beautiful playing in *Psyché,* the performance of *Daphnis* showed it to be incapable of the tonal marvels which the great American orchestras produce in the piece, and which are the only excuse for playing it. It is not, then, an orchestra of the caliber of the Berlin or Vienna Philharmonic, but—with its excellent strings, good brass and less good woodwinds—resembles the Vienna Symphony. About Pijper's symphony I felt as Bernard Shaw did about Saint-Saëns's *Samson et Dalila:* as the work of a Dutch composer it may have to be performed in Holland, but it shouldn't be inflicted on us, who have our own William Schuman and Samuel Barber to bear.

The Baltimore Symphony sounded like a much better orchestra than the Hague Philharmonic; but Peter Herman Adler may have thought it could get the attention of a New York public accustomed to hearing the Philadelphia, Cleveland and Boston Symphony Orchestras only by playing unusual music: Theodor Berger's Rondo Ostinato, Schönberg's Chamber Symphony Op. 9 (the version for full orchestra), and von Einem's *Das Stundenlied,* a setting of a ballad by Brecht. Schönberg's endless rambling made as little coherent musical sense to me this time as the last; von Einem's resourceful eclectic writing was an effective musical context for the Brecht words; and Berger's, after an initial piquancy, only served to exhibit at excessive length the excellence of the orchestra's winds.

A Boston Symphony concert again offered precise and beautiful-sounding playing by the orchestra and musically ineffective conducting by Leinsdorf, this time in Mahler's rarely played Sixth. The wooden performance didn't help the work; but earlier performances had left me with the same impression of it as I got this time—that its ideas were markedly inferior to those of the first four symphonies, and that its use of them was largely frenetic ranting carried to unbearable lengths.

The Cleveland Orchestra under Szell I chose to hear in Bartók's Concerto for Orchestra and Prokofiev's Symphony No. 5—two of the modern works which Szell deals with more satisfyingly than he does with Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert, and in which the orchestra exhibited the tone, precision and sensitiveness to his direction that make it one of the best. Szell's achievement in creating it and getting it to play as it does is a notable one; but even this achievement

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of Szell the conductor has been exaggerated in the press (I quoted some of the extravagances in a previous chronicle); and worse still are the equal claims for the far less notable achievements of Szell the musician. Nor does he merely accept the claims that are made for him: he originates some of them. An editorial in *High Fidelity,* entitled *The New Conductor,* informed its readers that the conductors like Toscanini, Furtwängler, Beecham and Walter—strong personalities who imposed their wills on orchestras and music—are being replaced by the conductor like Szell, whose "ideal of playing symphonic works by the ground rules of chamber music" means on the one hand that in his dealings with the orchestra he is "a peer among peers, a synthesizer, a point of focus," one who "works from within the ensemble rather than from without," and on the other hand that in his dealing with the music "the emphasis is not on Maestro's Beethoven Fifth, but on Beethoven's," which is to say that "the idiom of the composer is more conspicuous than the individualism of the re-creative artist," and "primitive autocracy has been replaced by self-imposed artistic discipline." This is all nonsense: the graceless and insensitive treatment of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert in the Szell-Cleveland Orchestra performances isn't the result of a chamber-music-rules operation by the hundred players and the conductor who is only a peer among peers; it represents the taste and will of Szell imposed on his players and the music, exactly as the taste and will of Toscanini were imposed on his players and the music to produce the plastic and sensitive treatment of the music in their performances. And the ass who wrote the nonsense got it from Szell—from his conversation in *High Fidelity* "with an old friend, critic Paul Henry Lang," which the editorial introduced.

In this conversation Lang asked Szell to explain how he achieved one after another of the unique and unprecedented marvels of his performances, which Szell was glad to tell him. And the first thing he spoke of was "my idea" of "a chamber music approach, not a hundred men playing while looking, like slaves, at the stick, but a hundred men playing, each of them listening, so far as possible, to the ninety-nine others, and trying to make music together the way a string quartet does. Because of the size of the orchestra it has to be done under the *guidance* of a conductor, but not under his *knout.*" But years ago, before Szell took over the Cleveland Orchestra, an orchestral musician talked to me about what was so remarkable about the Philadelphia Orchestra—its operation like a string quartet around William Kincaid and Marcel Tabuteau.

One other aspect of the Lang-Szell conversation is interesting. "It is a sad truth," a former NBC Symphony musician wrote to me not long ago, "that many of the conductors who were adumbrated by Toscanini's brilliance have never forgiven him his greatness." And so when Lang compliments Szell for his not excessive attention to detail,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

as against "the recording by a very distinguished conductor of advanced years who brought out every little detail with the utmost clarity—to the point where eventually it seemed mere meaningless precision," Szell replies in agreement: "Because probably the big general line was lost"—which, if it were true of this Toscanini performance, would make it unique among Toscanini performances. And later, when Lang asks about the great conductors of the past, Szell speaks of Nikisch and Strauss, and then adds that a man like Toscanini cannot be left unmentioned, but not, it turns out, because of his performances. "Whatever you may think about his interpretation of a specific work," says Szell, with the implication that the specific interpretations offered much to men of superior taste like Lang and Szell to shake their heads over in pained disapproval, "that he changed the whole concept of conducting and that he rectified many, many arbitrary procedures of a generation of conductors before him is now already authentic history."

At a concert of the Festival Orchestra of New York in Philharmonic Hall, Thomas Dunn, operating with competence and authority, got precise, sensitively phrased and beautiful-sounding playing from the orchestra in admirably paced and shaped performances of some of the music from Beethoven's *The Creatures of Prometheus* and in the orchestral contexts that were admirably related to John Browning's playing in Beethoven's Piano Concertos Nos. 1 and 3. Though this playing showed Browning to be greatly gifted, it didn't achieve entirely satisfying performance of the music, chiefly because of his habit of beginning a phrase strongly and then having it fall away to a whisper at the end—a prettification unsuitable in Beethoven.

Not even Schnabel ever offered Beethoven's *Diabelli Variations* and his *Hammerklavier* Sonata at one concert; and what made the Russian pianist Yakov Zak's announcement of these two gigantic works for his first appearance in New York even more remarkable was the fact that the other Russian pianists who have come here recently haven't played any of Beethoven's late piano music, giving one the impression that it hasn't been, and still isn't, played in Russia. Yet Zak, somehow, had got to it, learned to play it, and—I discovered at his recital—had the resources of technique and musical understanding that enabled him by himself, unaided by a tradition and context of other people's performances, to produce a highly satisfying statement of the *Diabelli Variations*. It was the performance of the sonata that—played strictly in accordance with Beethoven's printed directions—suffered from the absence of that tradition and context, from which Zak would have learned to make the changes of tempo that Beethoven didn't mark in the work but that pianists found were needed to shape and articulate it effectively.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Controversy

HANS J. MORGENTHAU

The Writer's Duty and His Predicament

An Open Letter in Answer to a Question

YOU HAVE ASKED ME WHY I HAVE STOPPED writing for *Commentary* and you have expressed your regret that I have done so. Since others have asked the same question and since the issue which has compelled me to sever my relations with *Commentary* is of general importance, I am glad to answer your question.

Let me say first of all that I share your regret. I have enjoyed, and profited from, my long association with *Commentary*. The articles I wrote for *Commentary* have been more widely quoted, commented upon, reprinted, and translated than those I published elsewhere. My regret is deepened by the difficulty in finding an appropriate regular outlet for my writings. The writer who speaks neither for the Establishment nor for any faction opposing it has a hard time in placing what he writes.

More seriously, the outlet open to a writer determines, at least in a certain measure, the kind of writing he can do. A writer who does not write, say, for *The New Yorker* is precluded from the kind of writing for which *The New Yorker* has a monopoly. On the other hand, a writer who specializes in writing for *Commentary* cannot help but adapt both substance and presentation to the character of that publication. Obviously, *Commentary* would not print what appears in *The New Yorker,* and vice versa. Thus the kind of outlet open to a writer limits and molds his creative energies. The more limited these outlets are, the fewer and more precarious are his opportunities for self-expression. What he actually writes, then, tells only half the story. What he could have written if somebody had been willing to print it will never be known.

Why, then, have I decided to close an opening to the reading world that satisfied me both in the kind of writing it allowed me and the kind of public my writing reached? In order to understand this decision and the issue underlying it, it is necessary to review briefly the facts which led to the decision and reveal the issue.

When I read in the September, 1964, issue of *Commentary* my article on "Goldwater—The Romantic Regression," I was stopped repeatedly

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

by words and phrases which I knew I could not have chosen and by substantive statements I knew I could not have made. I asked two of my associates to check the manuscript against the printed text, and they came up with more than one hundred changes. I refused to believe that this count could be accurate and asked for another check with a breakdown into substantive and stylistic changes. The result was thirty-seven changes in meaning and sixty-five changes in style. I thereupon wrote to the editor of *Commentary* the following letter:

> My article "Goldwater—The Romantic Regression," published in your September 1964 issue, has been drastically changed in language, emphasis, and content by extensive editing. I was not aware of these changes before the article appeared in print, otherwise I would not have consented to its publication. It is of course impossible to repair the damage which the editing has done to my language and emphasis without reprinting the article in its original form. I must, however, insist upon the restoration of two passages in which I have been made to say things I did not say and did not intend to say.
>
> My version of the first paragraph of the second column of page 66 reads as follows: . . . .
>
> The reference to Goldwater's voting record in the printed version was lifted from another passage and distorted in the process: from my reference to "the majority of the Republican members of Congress," "the majority of" was omitted.
>
> In the concluding section, I speculate upon the consequences of Goldwater's victory and defeat. Through editorial changes in the tenses, the character of my argument has been subtly changed.
>
> The last paragraph of the article in my version reads as follows: . . . .
>
> The edited version reads: "In either case, we would find ourselves in a condition. . . ." "In either case" is of course nonsense. If such an addition were necessary at all it must read "In the latter case."

I asked that this letter be printed in the forthcoming issue of *Commentary*, but it was not. Thus the readers of *Commentary* were presented with a piece of literature, drastically changed in content and style without the author's knowledge, which they attribute to the author, and the author has no chance of making known what he actually wrote.

It is obvious that this procedure violates generally accepted canons of editorial practice. The editor has three choices: he can print the manuscript as it stands; he can suggest editorial changes which the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

author is free to accept or reject; or he can reject the manuscript as being unsuitable for publication. What he cannot do is to substitute his judgment for that of the author. He cannot force himself as a ghost writer on an unsuspecting and unwilling author. Nor can he in this instance plead pressure of time; for the manuscript reached him a week earlier than usual, and the long-distance phone is at his disposal. By taking the place of the author, the editor makes it impossible for the latter to discharge his duties toward himself and toward society. What is at stake here is the issue of intellectual freedom in its most profound and personal sense, and insofar as the writer's inability to discharge his duties is concerned, it makes no difference if his intellectual freedom is abridged on purpose or, as here, through ignorance and obtuseness.

The editor would have the right to impose his judgment upon the author only if there existed one correct philosophy, one correct kind of argumentation, and one correct way of writing to the exception of all others. Societies indeed exist which believe in, and practice, these propositions; we call them totalitarian. There the writer must think, argue, and write as the editor tells him to, and generally the editor doesn't need to tell him because a rigid system of political and social rewards and punishments will keep the writer in line without editorial prodding. In a free society such as ours, the writer is subject to the rules of logic, grammar, and syntax, and even those the editor has no right to force upon the writer. He may only suggest their observance to the writer, who risks not being published if he does not observe them.

The ease with which the editor imposes his judgment upon the writer is a symptom of a barbarization which threatens to smother creative expression of any kind. This barbarism is oblivious of the true nature of creativity, assimilating it to some kind of standardized repetitive production, and therefore is incapable of respecting its uniqueness. More particularly, it has no feeling for the organic and intimate relationship between thought and the language through which thought is expressed.

Thus it comes about that great works of literature, philosophy, and scholarship are edited, condensed, summarized, and fragmented by hacks who know better than the authors what is "important" and what is not and how to express the meaning the author intended to convey. Thus it comes about that, to give only one example among many, Hochhuth's *The Deputy* is "produced" in New York in virtually unrecognizable form insofar as the dramatic intentions of the author are concerned, with scenes transposed, sentences transferred from the mouth of one person into that of another, whole sentences written in by the producer. It does not matter that *The Deputy* is not a very good play and that it is in need of cutting. What matters is that the producer usurped the functions of the writer, taking the writer's work as

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

raw material for what he thought the play should be like. This procedure would have been scandalous even if in the process the play had been improved, which, heaven knows, it was not. Mr. Hochhuth could have prevented the performance of the disfigured play by suing the producer. He did the least he could have done as a self-respecting author: he stayed away from the premiere.

It would, however, be unfair to blame the middlemen, the editors and producers, for this barbarization. The writers themselves are lacking in understanding of, and respect for, their mission. They don't mind, they even welcome, expressing their thoughts through the language of others. In consequence, the ghost writer has become an accepted literary institution. I remember how shocked I was a few years ago when I tried to engage a scholar of considerable repute in a conversation about a review of a book of mine which had appeared under his signature. He referred me to a graduate student who he said had written the review. What shocked me was the complete naturalness of that reference, as though it was naïve to assume that a scholar had actually written what he pretended to have written. The collectivization of scholarly research inevitably blurs the identity of authorship. Yet the lack of scruple with which reputable scholars appropriate the work of research assistants and graduate students points to more than a moral deficiency in certain individuals. It points to that degeneration in our culture which, by losing respect for individual language, has lost respect for individual thought as well.

Language and thought are indeed inseparable; for it is only through language that thought becomes conscious of itself and makes itself heard. Standardized language is appropriate to standardized thought, and here is the proper domain of the ghost writer, the presumptuous editor, and the usurping producer. Yet creative thought, through which the intellectual and moral personality of an individual expresses itself as uniquely as his physical person does through his fingerprints, requires a language as uniquely his own. His language is not just a carrier on which his thoughts as well as other thoughts can be transported or for which another carrier could be substituted performing the same mechanical function of transportation. His language *is* his thought. Change his language, and you have changed his thought.

The creative writer, faithful to his duty toward himself and society, searches for the language that reveals exactly what he wants to say. It is a painful task; for the language must be molded, like a piece of metal, to the thought. But it is also a rewarding task; for in that rare moment of perfect achievement, when meaning, rhythm, and sound have become one, the writer is enraptured by that aesthetic elation which poets and composers must feel when their work has been perfectly done. Language, then, becomes music, rhythmical and melodious, and the writer's ears measure its perfection by being reminded of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the rhythm, melody, and structure of a familiar piece of great music.

Language and thought stand in an organic and intimate relation to each other. (Writing the preceding sentence, for instance, I pondered whether "Thought and language" was preferable to "Language and thought." I chose the latter version, for I felt that its sequence of vowels and its rhythm are aesthetically satisfying and that since we are here dealing with the problem of language, we should start the paragraph with that word, thus setting its theme.) This relation, however, does not render the editor's task superfluous; it rather defines its nature and its limits. That perfect harmony between sound, rhythm, and meaning is but rarely attained. "Homer himself hath been observ'd to nod." In particular, no writer who must meet deadlines can write only perfect sentences. Thus the civilized editor who knows what it means to write and is endowed with that chameleon-like ability to crawl into the skin of his author, simulating the creative process, is indeed a valued and, at certain occasions, indispensable participant in the creative process. Writers have gratefully acknowledged their debt to such editors, and I acknowledge mine to Alfred Knopf, to whom I owe more than to any other single man whatever ability I have to express my thoughts in a language appropriate to them. It is ironic that in the article which has provided the occasion for this discussion I reprinted a passage from a book edited by Alfred Knopf, and that passage was drastically edited a second time by *Commentary!*

The run-of-the-mill editor is a world apart from this civilized type. With clumsy fingers, he tears apart the carefully spun fabric of language, giving no heed to what the intentions of the author might have been. When the author writes "if it were true that Dewey and Nixon did not share it," he writes "if Dewey and Nixon . . . ," as though the author were not aware of the existence of that English word and could not have chosen it if he had wanted to. It does not occur to him that the complexity of language might be the result of a complexity of thought which cannot be expressed otherwise or that an unexpected subtlety of phrase might have a purpose. For these literary retailers, language is a standardized commodity, and language that differs from theirs must be "wrong" because it differs. In common with all that is mediocre, they resent excellence which by its very existence indicates the limits of their gift. I have sometimes been tempted to offer one of Carlyle's essays for publication without revealing the author's name, just to see how Carlyle would sound in the standardized version of higher journalese.

The editorial attack upon the writer's workmanship is vulgar and barbaric; for it has no feeling for either thought or language and for the unbreakable relation between the two, and it substitutes for genuine literature, which by its very nature is peculiar and unique, a *lingua franca* which the middlemen think is the only English there can be because it is theirs. Yet that onslaught is also immoral; it offends

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

not only against thought and language but also against the inalienable rights of the human person. It not only breaks the ties between thought and language, disfiguring both; but it also intrudes in the relation between the human person, on the one hand, and his thought and language, on the other. By doing so, it wounds and disfigures the human person. *"Le style c'est l'homme."* What you do to his language, you do to the man. Distort his language, and you have distorted the man who, as an intellect and a moral person, lives in his language. The writer is nothing without his language. Take his language away, and you have silenced him. Put words into his mouth, and you have made him speak in a voice not his own. Refuse him the right to say what he wants to say in his own words, and you have as thoroughly destroyed his freedom, nay, himself, as though you had sealed his lips and chained his hands. At best, he will have become a freak, a composite of his own thought and language and somebody else's.

This is the issue, my friend. You will, I trust, now understand that I could have continued writing for *Commentary* only at the risk of compromising my thought and language, that is, myself. By avoiding this risk, I run of course the other risk of not being able to say what I want to say as often, in the form, and where I would like to. But this is no more than an inconvenience. It does not detract from my most precious possession and it keeps inviolate the most sacred precinct of my being: my freedom of thought and expression. That is what counts.

REPLY BY NORMAN PODHORETZ

FIRST AS TO THE FACTS: (1) It is *not* true that substantive changes were made in Mr. Morgenthau's piece "Goldwater—The Romantic Regression." His grammar was corrected, where necessary; his syntax was straightened out, where necessary; a few of his gaucheries were eliminated; and in one case an obscure point was clarified by the transposition of a sentence to the place where it logically belonged. Rather than bore your readers with detailed demonstration, I will merely point out that I had edited at least fifteen pieces by Mr. Morgenthau in the past in precisely this way. By some strange coincidence, these were the very pieces which, according to his own testimony, were "more widely quoted, commented upon, reprinted and translated" than any he has published elsewhere.

(2) It is *not* true that *Commentary* refused to print the letter from which Mr. Morgenthau quotes so selectively. In my reply to that letter, I said, among other things: ". . . I'm willing to publish a correction, but I must object to the form of the letter you sent me. The language you use to characterize the editing that was done on your article is ex-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cessive and insulting. I must therefore ask you to revise your letter and to confine yourself to requesting that the original language of your article in the two paragraphs under contention be printed. This is a case of honorable disagreement about English usage between an author and an editor and it should not be made the occasion for a public expression of moral outrage." Mr. Morgenthau never bothered to answer—at least not until now.

(3) It *is* true that Mr. Morgenthau did not see the edited version of his Goldwater article in advance of publication. For this I apologized to him, explaining that we had been behind schedule with the September issue and that there had been no time to send him either a typescript or proofs. He says above that the Goldwater piece came in earlier than usual; he neglects to mention that our deadline for September had been pushed back a week, so that the article was in fact late. He also says that the long-distance telephone was at my disposal. So indeed it was, but Mr. Morgenthau is not an easy man to work with on the telephone when time is short. I called him once a year or so ago after he had sent back an edited manuscript with a grammatical error restored that I had corrected in the original. "You can't say it that way, Hans," I told him, "it's ungrammatical." "How do *you* know?" he answered. Be all that as it may, I agree that he should have seen the edited version of the Goldwater piece, but I would also point out that this was the first time in our long and intimate association that the customary editorial procedure was not followed. He had a right to be annoyed, but as a professional journalist writing a regular column for a monthly magazine, he might have understood that deadlines sometimes create exceptional circumstances.

Of course Mr. Morgenthau does not see himself as a journalist; nor is he even content with being one of our most distinguished commentators on politics and international affairs. He is, apparently, a "creative writer" comparable, if you please, to Carlyle, and endowed with the skill, the taste, and the sensibility to write perfect sentences at the contemplation of which he "is enraptured by that aesthetic elation which poets and composers must feel when their work has been perfectly done." He modestly admits that he manages to achieve such perfection only rarely—after all, as he reminds us, even Homer nods—but might he not achieve it more often if clumsy editors resentful of excellence were not always getting in his way?

I had not known, I confess, that Mr. Morgenthau was a great poet. I also confess that I am not sufficiently discerning to be reminded by Mr. Morgenthau's prose, as he is, "of the rhythm, melody, and structure of a familiar piece of great music." In its unedited state, to tell the truth, it often strikes me as ponderous, repetitious, and rhetorically gauche. If that is what he means when he charges me with insensitivity, I hereby enter an enthusiastic plea of guilty.

Mr. Morgenthau speaks of "barbarization." Yes indeed, I agree. The English language is being barbarized by people who have not taken

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the trouble to master its mechanics and who are permitted by timid or irresponsible editors to further its debasement in books and magazines. Our culture is being barbarized by "writers" who brag of having an individual style when half the time they cannot even write a correct English sentence, and who are able to bully editors into accepting offenses against the language, against logic, against the most elementary literary standards—all in the name of "creativity" and "freedom." "In a free society such as ours," Mr. Morgenthau declares, "the writer is subject to the rules of logic, grammar, and syntax." To this I say Amen. But he is dreadfully wrong when he adds that "even those the editor has no right to force upon the writer." The truth is that the editor not only has the right to enforce the rules of logic, grammar, and syntax upon the writer (and we are talking, remember, about journalists, not masters experimenting with form); the editor has the duty. If he fails in his duty out of cowardice, laziness, or incompetence, he is contributing to the barbarization of our culture by furthering the debasement of the language which is the medium of that culture.

I will add only that I have the greatest admiration for Mr. Morgenthau as a political commentator and that I was very sorry to lose him as a contributor. But I would rather have lost him than publish bad English in *Commentary*. For more than five years I was able to publish his work without also publishing bad English because he permitted me to edit him. It is a violation both of his privacy and mine to say this in public; that is why I asked him to revise the letter to which he refers above. And that is also why I regret that he chose to air his quarrel with *Commentary,* and that THE HUDSON REVIEW chose to print it.

REJOINDER BY HANS J. MORGENTHAU

I SHALL LIMIT MYSELF TO POINTING OUT five demonstrable factual inaccuracies in Mr. Podhoretz's statement.

First, the edited version of the Goldwater article differs indeed from mine, not only in the nuances of the argument but also in matters of fact. For instance, Walter Lippmann called my attention to a factual error, which I readily admitted, wondering how I could have made it. Comparison showed that the error was not in my version but had been introduced through careless editing.

Second, it is not true that any article of mine was ever edited in the manner the Goldwater article was. Whenever attempts in this direction were made, I have resisted them. A comparison between the carbons of my articles and the versions printed in *Commentary* would show that both are substantially identical in every case.

Third, it is of course true that Mr. Podhoretz refused to print my

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

letter. What else does it mean when he tells me that he shall not print this letter but rather another one, indicating what its content ought to be?

Fourth, if the Goldwater piece was late in arriving, Mr. Podhoretz was certainly discreet about the fact; I learned about it only from his present reply.

Fifth, the burden of Mr. Podhoretz's argument appears to be that, not being able to write printable English, I owe it to his editing skill that my articles printed in *Commentary* do not seem to be devoid of literary merit. This argument leaves unexplained the fact that I have written in identical style for a great number of distinguished publications which have not had the benefit of Mr. Podhoretz's editorial authority.

Notes on Contributors

E. M. CIORAN's latest book, *La Chute dans le Temps,* was recently published by Gallimard. Two other of his essays, translated by Marthiel Mathews, "A Bouquet of Heads" and "A Portrait of Civilized Man," have been published in earlier issues of this Review.

The Brooklyn-born New York poet, JACK MARSHALL, is traveling in Mexico this summer.

JOSEPH WHITEHILL is an engineer and writer who lives in Maryland and has published two books: *Able Baker and Others* (short stories), and *The Angers of Spring* (a novel). He has recently been named Lecturer in Fiction in the Writing Seminars, Johns Hopkins University.

LYSANDER KEMP has lived for the past twelve years in Mexico, writing and translating. He informs us that the characters and incidents described in "The Conquest" are imaginary, and not based on any chronicle, though the landscapes are mostly real.

ALAN SILLITOE is the English poet and novelist, author of *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* and *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner.* His new novel, *The Death of William Posters,* has just been published in England, and he is now assembling a third book of poems.

RUTH FAINLIGHT (Mrs. Alan Sillitoe) was born in New York, but has lived in England, France, Spain and Morocco in recent years. A book of her poems is to be published by Macmillan (London) later this year.

BURTON RAFFEL is Assistant Professor of English, State University of New York, at Stony Brook, and a translator from many languages. His most recent book is *An Anthology of Modern Indonesian Poetry* (Univ. of California Press).

STEPHEN TAYLOR lives in New York City and has contributed film criticism to various publications. He is currently at work on a novel.

HANS J. MORGENTHAU, the noted political analyst, is Albert A. Michelson Distinguished Service Professor of Political Science and Modern History, University of Chicago.

F. D. REEVE has a forthcoming book of literary criticism, *Aspects of the Russian Novel;* his poems have appeared in numerous magazines.

ROGER SALE will be teaching this summer at Cornell.

JOSEPH KERMAN, author of *Opera as Drama* and Professor of Music at the University of California (Berkeley), is working on a critical study of the Beethoven string quartets.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Reviews

HOWARD GREEN

The Countess' Hat[1]

WHEN VALÉRY WAS ASKED WHY HE HADN'T WRITTEN any novels, he replied, "I could never bring myself to write, 'The Countess put on her hat and went out.' " How nice it would be if more writers shared his reluctance. For the besetting sin of novelists is their fondness for the merely insignificant. It is not hard to be insignificant in poetry and drama, but it is just a little harder—the novel offers such unlimited fluidity, such fearsome capacity for length, such prodigious opportunities for slovenly discursiveness. "Significance," of course, does not come simply from writing about matters of great social or philosophical importance—as we know only too well from the productions of C. P. Snow and J.-P. Sartre—it is a quality of the writer's vision, of his ability to see the world in a new way, to make us see it so, and to avoid purveying what has been seen a thousand times before. The very word "novel" should be a reminder: if every novelist were to recall that it means "something new" and restrain himself accordingly, nine out of ten novels would never be written, and the tenth would be only half as long.

Consider what happens in Angus Wilson's *Late Call*. He is portraying the plight of an aging woman, Sylvia Calvert, forced by ill health to give up her work and live with her son. She is drawn compassionately and with a sharp feeling for the sadness and bewilderment of an active person reduced suddenly and finally to living passively in a milieu alien to her upbringing and temperament. For her son Harold, a respected and successful schoolmaster, is enthusiastically "modern," strong in psychological theory but poor in genuine understanding, immersed in the civic activities and bewitched by the material glories of life in a brand new English garden suburb—functional houses, bright colors, power mowers, electrical kitchens, and all the rest, in

1 LATE CALL, by *Angus Wilson*. The Viking Press. $4.95. THE WHITE FATHER, by *Julian Mitchell*. Farrar, Straus & Co. $4.95. THE WOMAN FROM SARAJEVO, by *Ivo Andrić*. Alfred A. Knopf. $5.95. BELL CALL, by *Sylvia Ashton-Warner*. Simon and Schuster. $5.00. VONDA ROSEGOOD, by *Richard Dohrman*. Harper & Row. $5.95. ONE DAY, by *Wright Morris*. Atheneum. $5.95. THE GAME OF DOSTOEVSKY, by *Samuel Astrachan*. Farrar, Straus & Giroux. $4.95. THE FINAL BEAST, by *Frederick Buechner*. Atheneum. $4.50. AN AMERICAN DREAM, by *Norman Mailer*. The Dial Press. $4.95. SOUL OF WOOD, by *Jakov Lind*. Grove Press. $3.95.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the virtues and uses of which he tries tirelessly but in vain to instruct his mother, meanwhile obtusely overriding her only real want, which is to make herself unobtrusively busy and useful around the house. To understand the mother's predicament, we must indeed understand the world into which she has been thrust, but a few representative traits would have sufficed. Instead we are asked to look at Harold's educational theories under a microscope; we sit through a reading of the minutes (in dramatic form) of a civic meeting at which he argues the merits and demerits of a zoning amendment; we attend a party at his house, are given the complete menu, and follow the conversation in all its splendid detail:

> "Don't take any notice of Geoff, Mrs. Calvert," the woman called Muriel said, "he's a cockney. He doesn't know any better."
>
> "As you will have gathered, Mother, these are the Bartleys—Muriel and Geoff."
>
> "No less!" Muriel agreed. . . .

We go with the family to a Chinese restaurant where we inspect the décor minutely enough for an insurance inventory; we follow the doings and problems of Harold's children which are spread out for us like case histories (one of the boys turns out to be—surprise!—homosexual) . . . and so it goes for 316 pages. At the end I found myself thinking wistfully of Sydney Smith's remark to a young man who asked for advice about how to become a good writer: "You should cross out every other word," he said. "You have no idea what vigor it will give to your style."

The detail is insignificant in intention because it is stone-cold naturalism, in substance because suburbia has been chronicled and over-chronicled, and in effect because it inhibits—all but submerges—what is really significant: Wilson's feeling for the intricacies of personal relationships and for the comic undertones of social intercourse. The former is apparent whenever he simply concentrates on Sylvia; as for the latter, witness the scene, both funny and agonizing, in which her husband picks up acquaintance with a middle-aged American couple—she suffers presciently as he first delights them with his easy gregariousness, then irritates them by being unintentionally patronizing, and finally offends them as he gets drunker and drunker and lapses deeper and deeper into the windy vulgarity she has had to endure for forty years.

In its virtues and vices, Julian Mitchell's *The White Father* is akin to *Late Call.* The "White Father," Hugh Shrieve, is District Officer in a British African colony of the Ngulu, a small, harmless, happy-go-lucky tribe certain to be exterminated by its more aggressive neighbors as soon as the imminent independence of the colony is proclaimed and British authority withdrawn. He goes to London hoping to talk

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

his superiors into arranging some form of protection for the tribe, and during his stay finds himself increasingly disenchanted with his own kind. Compared with the Ngulu, who have given him a feeling for their own peculiarly innocent kind of happiness and gaiety, he finds his own people, for all their urbanity and good will, generally drab, essentially self-centred and often unwittingly callous. The lessons of this contrast are borne in upon us dexterously, and Julian Mitchell avoids the twin dangers of sermonizing and sentimentality, which obviously lurk in this situation, by keeping us constantly aware of the undercurrents of humor in Hugh's relations with the Ngulu. One is reminded a little of Dinesen's dealings with the Kikuyu in *Out of Africa*. But, alas! like Angus Wilson, he too feels obliged to document Modern England, here Disaffected Youth instead of Middle Class Suburbia. For there is an aimless young university student, Edward Gilchrist, who attaches himself to Hugh, becomes a partisan in his cause, and so finds direction in a life hitherto without any particular interest save jazz and pop music. Which entails, of course, a lengthy depiction (complete with sub-plot) of the world of jazz and pop music, whose denizens distract us from Hugh Shrieve as effectively as Mr. Wilson's suburbanites distract us from Sylvia Calvert, but who contrive to be even more irksome. The portentous mystique which it is fashionable to conjure up from the world of jazz seems to me tedious and often silly.

Like *Late Call* and *The White Father,* Ivo Andrić's *The Woman from Sarajevo,* published in 1945 and recently translated from the Serbo-Croatian, is the study of a personality, but it is a good deal more impressive. When Miss Raika is fifteen, her father, a hitherto successful business man in Sarajevo whom she idolizes, dies of ill health brought on by the failure of his business, leaving her with limited means and the responsibility of caring for her naive and ineffectual mother. On his deathbed he cautions her to watch her money closely:

> To it you should devote all your attention and all your strength. When it comes to thrift, you must be merciless with yourself and others . . . above all, and at all times, you must suppress those so-called higher considerations, those lordly habits of inner gentility, delicacy, and high-mindedness . . . and you'd better learn that people are decent and conscientious only toward those who don't depend on them or ask anything of them.

The young girl pursues this advice single-mindedly, exercising a rigid economy, becoming a sharp and ruthless business woman before she is even twenty, and accumulating a small fortune through usury. We follow her through the first World War and the turmoil of its aftermath, when her money begins to dwindle, partly because of devaluation, partly because her rigidity will not let her adapt to, or even

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

begin to comprehend, changing conditions—she understands only money and nothing else, so ultimately she cannot even really understand money. She becomes timid and cautious in her confusion and engages only in piddling and senseless transactions. Finally she simply tries to conserve what she has, living alone parsimoniously in a wretched, almost unfurnished house, moving her bundles of notes and coins from one hiding place to another, sitting for hours on end, frozen and almost blinded, in her dark unheated room, darning an old stocking or patching an old slipper even the poorest wretch would long since have thrown away:

> And afterwards, as she looks at it, her whole being expands in the knowledge that one more housekeeping item has been set down in the asset column of her consolidated balance sheet of losses and gains, and even more: that in the formidable and unceasing battle against waste, spoilage, and costs, another victory has been won against odds, that on the great galleon of the universe, constantly threatened from every quarter, one more insidious leak has been patched up.

This is a compelling study in dehumanization, and what helps make it compelling is Andrić's restraint in describing the world around Miss Raika: the confusion of Serbian life during this period is described in detail enough to set off her isolation as her obsession hardens, but no more. In this restraint lies an object-lesson. For Sylvia Calvert and Hugh Shrieve are characters conceived just as intelligently as Miss Raika and their situations are almost, if not perhaps quite, as interesting, but they lack her substance. It is by eschewing the kind of garrulousness which enthralls the two English novelists that Andrić gives Miss Raika a monolithic intensity that we are not likely to forget.

Sylvia Ashton-Warner's *Bell Call* is also a study in monomania. Tarl Packet's mania is "freedom"—her own freedom—which she pursues unshakably with total disregard for practicality and for the feelings and convenience of others (except her four small children, with whom she is infinitely gentle and patient). The trouble starts when it is time for seven-year-old Benjamin to start attending school regularly—this is New Zealand and school is compulsory. She feels he is not yet "ready," and her unwavering refusal to let him attend brings her (and her husband) into conflict with the school authorities and eventually with the courts. It also ruins her marriage, for under the pressures of supporting a large family and providing the wherewithal for Tarl's experiments in freedom (all expensive), her husband Gavin, once an idealistic Bohemian like herself, has turned into a more or less conventional member of society whom she regards with contempt and to whose sacrifices on her behalf she remains coldly indifferent. She has a confidant in Dan Francis, a writer, widowed and consider-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ably older than she, who first resents her for the practical and emotional demands she makes upon him, which interfere with his writing, but who gradually becomes fascinated with her. Finally in love with her, he cannot make up his mind whether she is fundamentally right in her obdurate pursuit of freedom for herself (because she has the courage to be what we would all secretly wish to be) or merely appallingly callous and selfish. Ethically the book is impressive, because it probes so deeply and delicately into the relations between personal freedom and social responsibility; artistically it is impressive, because the ambiguity of Tarl's character is so thoroughly *felt*—it is impossible not to experience in one's own heart the mixture of exasperation and admiration she provokes in Dan and in her husband, and it is equally impossible to separate the two emotions.

To her study of character, Sylvia Ashton-Warner brings a finer and more subtle sensibility than Andrić, and she is attempting something more complex: he restricts the compass of Miss Raika's mania almost entirely to its effects on herself, whereas she scrutinizes Tarl's effect on her children, on her husband, on her friends, essentially on the whole society she is a part of ("trapped in," Tarl would say). Yet, of the two books, *The Woman from Sarajevo* seems to me ultimately the more effective, largely for technical reasons. It is told very simply, at times rather awkwardly, as a prolonged flashback. We see the events essentially in chronological order as Miss Raika recalls them, but Andrić is by no means a purist in his handling of the point of view; if he feels we should have some historical information he moves out of Miss Raika's mind to supply it and moves back in again when he has finished. Enough to make Henry James turn in his grave . . . but the touch of clumsiness gives, in effect, a suggestion of unvarnished honesty, a sombre and relentless directness. A measure of this simplicity would have helped *Bell Call,* for if insignificance can result from too much matter, it can also result from too much technique, and in reading this book our grasp of Tarl's character is constantly hampered by having to disentangle it from the web of an overwrought technique.

The narrative is broken up into a series of scenes, often very short, juxtaposed with the minimum of connective tissue. *In medias res* seems to be the watchword, and Miss Ashton-Warner will jump in with, "Where is Gavin?" or "Oh, isn't Jim Prenderghast lovely?" or "Has that boy been here?" Since she also uses the present tense throughout, the prose takes on a staccato, fragmentary breathless movement, which does little to enlighten and much to annoy us. This drawback is compounded by a girlish fussiness in the writing, which can degenerate into whimsy (here is one of the many "bell calls"—the school bell talking as it calls Tarl's children to school):

> Benjamin, calls the bell sadly in the morning, will you never have done with holidays? And Ramona—astonished—where the devil

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> have you got to? Don't tell me you've dropped us too. We thought you loved your lessons. Your work was so good the teacher put it on the wall. We all thought you were fearfully clever. Are you . . . have you succumbed to the Do-Nothing too? Ramona . . . Ramona. . . .

It can also degenerate into an appalling sentimentality:

> Angela [Dan's married daughter] is a willowy-wandy girl swaying all ways, taller than Tarl Pracket and more like Dan than her mother. She's all fair hair tossing, white teeth laughing and blue eyes sparking. She jumps at sudden noises and touches people easily. Her hands reach out swiftly in the gestures of love as one finds in women who live with kisses from the dawn right round to the next, who breathe kisses and tears like air.

But most irritating of all, perhaps, is a gimmick in the point of view. For what we at first take to be the author's omniscient voice turns out to be none other than the voice of Dan's dead wife, a gratuitous twist which in no way aids our perception and which prompts some embarrassing excursions into tricksiness:

> . . . Tarl is herself, that's all. Beside the flame that is Angela, Tarl is frost, excepting where children are concerns. But comparisons belong to mortals and if I ever found myself in the afterlife, looking back from the advantage of eternity, still blaming a person for what she is, I'd put down my phantom pen and pick up a phantom shovel.

More ambitious in scope and more complex in intention than any of these novels is Richard Dohrman's *Vonda Rosegood.* Like *Bell Call,* it provokes some reflections on the meaning of technique, but in a somewhat different way. For although Sylvia Ashton-Warner's treatment is too elaborate for her subject, one does not have the feeling that she is cultivating technique out of vanity. In *Vonda Rosegood* and in some of the other novels, technique seems, in varying degrees, to be a means of displaying the author's ingenuity rather than illuminating his subject.

Vonda Rosegood, a middle-aged waitress, still vestigially attractive and easily available, who comes to work in a small Southern town, turns out to have a gift for faith-healing, a gift which she passively and rather unwillingly allows to be exploited. She helps many people, among them several prominent local citizens, who are a little shamefaced about "believing" but who believe nevertheless because they have been cured. The most consistent hold-out is Lon Murtha, the Chief of Police, whose wife has been paralyzed from the waist down by myelitis. He remains sceptical partly because his own intelligence demands a rationally ordered universe, partly because he wants to protect his wife (who passionately hopes that Vonda will cure her) from what he is convinced would inevitably be a desperate disappoint-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ment. A series of events too complicated to summarize lead to Vonda's being charged with murder. The calm of the small county seat in which the trial is held is disrupted by an invasion of newspaper reporters and TV cameramen; and the highly-charged atmosphere precipitates crises in the private lives of the leading characters and in the public life of the community, for Vonda's partisans riot on her behalf and the riots take on (altogether accidentally) ugly racial overtones. Dohrman sets before us a great many characters—rather too many, perhaps, although, unlike Messrs. Wilson and Mitchell he has good reason for his prodigality: he is concerned with the nature of a whole community—through whose inter-relations, skilfully marshalled, he illumines the tangle of motives and feelings that underlie action. This is his strength. And his depiction of the Chief of Police suggests a genuine tragic power: it intimates how, in unlucky circumstances, reason and unreason, good and evil, public responsibility and private morality become so confused and entangled that a man of good will, good sense and good feeling may be driven to commit a series of blunders which are disastrous for him as a private individual and as a public official and which immerse him in shame and bewilderment.

What mutes this tragic power, though, is a self-conscious virtuosity in characterization. Mr. Dohrman has a fine sense of individuality, but it is not always under control, so that from time to time his characters develop a slick and stagey eccentricity, lapse from being into posturing. And, at the end, he is seduced into overplaying his hand disastrously by making Vonda, with her touch, rejuvenate the face of a man in his middle fifties so that he looks as if he were thirty again and then restore full bodily movement to a young woman recently paralyzed by a fall. Thus, I am afraid, marring the imaginative assent we have been able to give her earlier cures (all within the range of psychosomatic possibility) which he has used until then to explore with such good effect the nebulous region lying between reason and non-reason.

Wright Morris' *One Day* is also concerned with the problem of finding meaning in a world subject to irrational events; and, like *Vonda Rosegood,* it sets out to do so by watching the reaction of people in a small community, Escondido, California, to some unusual events—a new-born infant is left at the local animal shelter and, on the same day, President Kennedy is assassinated. The characters are thereby prompted to examine their relationships with each other, with themselves, and with their own pasts, and they are confronted with the difficulty of finding true relatedness or a significant mode of action in modern American life. That this is a thoughtful book is clear; it is not so clear what the thought amounts to. This is partly because Mr. Morris is so intent on pursuing the eccentricity of his characters that we keep losing track of their relation to each other and to the theme,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

but mainly because the complicated time scheme and repeatedly shifting point of view serve less to express the day's confusion than to confuse the reader himself.

Of Samuel Astrachan's *The Game of Dostoevsky,* one can only say that it seems designed solely to display Samuel Astrachan's ingenuity. Connoisseurs of the academic novel—but nobody else—will be delighted by this book because it is academic in a triple sense. First, it is about academic people. Second, it has no relevance to life. And third, to understand it one must be an academician, for the game of Dostoevsky which the characters play is a highbrow adaptation of Monopoly in which each player confesses his sins by inventing them in the character of some literary figure. The Wolgamuts (for so Mr. Astrachan's group of figures call themselves) decide to use Henry James's *The Tragic Muse* and Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* as texts for two games. So if you are going to read *The Game of Dostoevsky* you first have to read *The Tragic Muse* and *Pride and Prejudice* . . . and my advice would be to stop there. The anonymous scribe of the dust jacket says of this book: "*The Game of Dostoevsky* is a deeply ambiguous novel that withholds and obscures its meanings with great skill." The obscurity is real enough; whether any meaning is withheld is doubtful, and I am afraid there is nothing in the situations, the characters or the ideas that could possibly tempt one to find out.

Cleverness is also the undoing of a better book, Frederick Buechner's *The Final Beast.* Theodore Nicolet, Mr. Buechner's hero, is a young, widowed Presbyterian minister in a small New England town who is undergoing a struggle of conscience because he is attracted to Rooney Vail, the pretty and neurotic wife of one of his parishioners. He is a very modern minister indeed, whose Christianity is so diffident as to be more diffidence than Christianity ("I've never gone in much for the Holy Ghost," remarks Rooney's husband, and the minister rejoins, "Well, I'm sure the feeling's mutual"), and whose moment of religious illumination must constitute a nadir in theophany (it came from a remark made by a youthful drinking companion: "What he said was very simple. He just put together two things I'd never heard put together before. One of them was eats it . . . And Jesus Christ . . . That was the other thing he said. According to him, Christ eats it too . . . Much later I realized my drinking companion had spoken the truth. Christ does eat it, of course"). One is so little convinced that Nicolet's faith exists as anything other than a rubber bone his ego can gnaw on when it gets hungry, that the religious aspect of his character, which is presumably central, merely serves to add a prurient flavor of theological titillation to his sexual yearning for Rooney. The prurience, which is surely inadvertent, comes from Mr. Buechner's reluctance to think at all seriously about his subject. He is like Salinger and Updike: all three are deft, charming and sensitive writers, but

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

they all tend to suppose that those virtues automatically confer value on the people and situations they are writing about. Since that is not necessarily so, their work often turns into a merely narcissistic display of deftness, charm and sensitivity. They are all good at depicting wayward and vulnerable characters, but since they are all tempted to suppose that waywardness and vulnerability are in themselves manifestations of moral sanctity, we are constantly being called on to admire their characters, no matter how seedy they may otherwise be and no matter how much harm they do to themselves or to others. A modern reincarnation of the doctrine of *la belle âme*.

Which brings us to Norman Mailer.

The hero of *An American Dream*, Stephen Richards Rojack, is a Professor of Existential Psychology at a university in New York, he is forty-three years old, and, in his own eyes, he is a failure as a husband and an intellectual. But as an intellectual he is no ordinary failure (he is only *half*-Jewish), and he is no ordinary failure as a husband ("I do not know why you have trouble with your wife. You are absolutely a genius, Mr. Rojack," says his wife's maid after a short spell in bed with him). He is no ordinary forty-three: in about thirty otherwise crowded hours, he consumes a flood of bourbon, rum, gin and brandy, and manages two orgasms apiece with the maid and a nightclub singer he picks up—genius indeed, with all that liquor. And he is no ordinary professor: he is a war hero ("I was the one intellectual in America's history with a DSC"), a former buddy of Jack Kennedy, an ex-Congressman, a television personality with his own interview show, and an all-purpose tough guy who settles cocktail party arguments with jabs to the head and slugs to the belly, outfaces a prizefighter, a mobster and three police detectives at various points in the action, beats up with his own bare hands a Negro who pulls a switchblade on him, and, to prove a point (clearer to himself than to the reader) walks around a one-foot wide parapet some thirty stories above ground level on a wet and windy night. All this after an interview with his estranged wife Deborah, the daughter of a financial tycoon, who has told him not only that she doesn't love him any more, not one tiny bit, but also that she's having a ball with her three current lovers. So he strangles her. After all, she *was* being rather bitchy, and an intellectual with a DSC owes *something* to his self-respect. He feels much better afterwards: "I was weary with a most honorable fatigue, and my flesh seemed new. I had not felt so nice since I was twelve. It seemed inconceivable at this instant that anything in life could fail to please." Feeling thus refreshed, he tidies up the room a little and pitches the body out of the window so as to make the murder appear a suicide. An investigation ensues, in the course of which he engages in the various activities mentioned above, but the police, although suspicious, don't pin anything on him, and off he goes to begin a new life in Yucatán, stopping in Las Vegas on

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the way to pick up a few thousand dollars (he is, of course, a wizard gambler).

It sounds like a spoof: the American Dream of the American Male killing the castrating American Female and getting away with it. And indeed the characters have all the brightly stereotyped quality of figures in a comic fantasy: Rojack, the fashionable existentialist hero (by Mickey Spillane out of Jean-Paul Sartre); Deborah, the All-American harpy, beautiful, rich, domineering; Kelly, her father, the American tycoon, self-made, worth two hundred million dollars, connected with the Mob and the CIA, and harboring an incestuous passion for his daughter; Cherry, the nightclub singer, a sweet Southern girl gone wrong in the Big City; Shago Martin, her lover, hip and hooked Negro jazz singer. . . .

How nice if this were all really a joke, however tedious—a comic gesture of farewell to the role of professional *enfant terrible* even Mailer himself should be bored with by now. One would like to think so, in the hope that the talent which *The Naked and the Dead* held out might finally be used for something more interesting than a display of the author's ego (or libido). But it isn't a joke. For all the hard-boiled surface humor, Mailer takes every one of these appalling clichés seriously: it is as if Dostoevsky had written the Walter Mitty stories.

Early in the book, Rojack tells us that as an existential psychologist he maintained, "The not inconsiderable thesis that magic, dread and the perception of death were the roots of motivation"—a thesis which stimulates Mailer to a great deal of apocryphal typing. For example, Rojack is made to justify the resentment which led him to murder his wife by assuring us that the two of them were embroiled in some kind of magical battle:

> But what I did not know was which of us imprisoned the other, and how? It was horror this edge of madness to lie beside Deborah in a marriage bed and wonder who was responsible for the cloud of foul intent which lifted on the mingling of our breath. Yes, I had come to believe in spirits and demons, in devils, warlocks, omens, wizards and fiends, in incubi and succubi; more than once had I sat up in a strange woman's bed feeling claws on my chest, a familiar bad odor above the liquor on my tongue and Deborah's green eyes staring at me in the dark, an oppression close to strangling on my throat. She was evil, I would decide, and then think next that goodness could come on a visit to evil only in the disguise of evil; yes, evil would know that goodness had come only by the power of its force, *etc.*

Or again, towards the end of the novel, when Rojack is having a long and would-be metaphysical conversation about God and the devil, power and luck, money and talent with Deborah's father, he has a vision of Shago Martin and Cherry in bed together:

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> Then I was caught. For I wanted to escape from that intelligence which let me know of murders in one direction and conceive of visits to Cherry from the other, I wanted to be free of magic, the tongue of the Devil, the dread of the Lord, I wanted to be some sort of rational man again, nailed tight to details, promiscuous, reasonable, blind to the reach of the seas.

Or again, when he is thinking about dread, Rojack is given to conversations with the moon:

> So I stood on the balcony by myself and stared at the moon which was full and very low. I had a moment then. For the moon spoke back to me. By which I do not mean that I heard voices, or Luna and I indulged in the whimsy of a dialogue, no, truly it was worse than that. Something in the deep of that full moon, some tender and not so innocent radiance traveled fast as the thought of lightning across our night sky, out and a leap through space and into me. And I suddenly understood the moon. Believe it if you will. The only true journey of knowledge is from the depth of one being to the heart of another and I was nothing but open raw depths at that instant . . . there were clefts and rents which cut like geological faults right through all the lead and concrete and kapok and leather of my ego, that mutilated piece of insulation, I could feel my being, ridiculous enough, what! I could feel lights shifting inside myself, drifting the vapors over the broken rocks of my ego.

These passages will suggest, although by no means do justice to, the pretentiousness of this anti-novel.

What a pity . . . for even this puerile and shoddy nonsense cannot quite submerge his real talents. A sharp descriptive power (where he doesn't indulge in pseudo-poeticism *à la* Henry Miller) especially apt in evoking atmosphere or sensation—there is a remarkable sketch of Rojack's feeling of hallucinated awareness after killing Deborah. A strong sense of drama—he knows how to realize intensely the shifting emotions of characters in conflict. And an elemental narrative energy which is very uncommon today—even this book would be enjoyable as a suspense story if you could keep your mind off the ideas (easy enough) and off the morality (unfortunately quite impossible).

For the morality (if one may call it such) obtrudes. Its crux is that Rojack kills his wife and gets away with it and that Mailer strives in every possible way to elicit our sympathy for the murderer. Why? Because Rojack is really a good guy, a *belle âme,* a man whose transgressions, up to and including murder, must be forgiven him because he has such a sensitive and beautiful soul. No doubt he kills Deborah for reasons more sophisticated than those of the hoodlum who kills somebody for his wallet, but morally there is no difference—unless it be that Rojack is the more disgusting because the more aware. In *The Naked and the Dead* Mailer spoke out against brutality and the other

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

abuses of absolute power, but he has gone a long journey since then—backwards.

In any case, when it comes to magic, dread and the perception of death, Mailer is but a sheep in wolf's clothing. Magic is a dangerous subject for literary men; nothing more quickly provokes them into absurdity (witness W. B. Yeats and D. H. Lawrence), and Mailer needs no provocation. And since his concern is not understanding but posturing, dread and the perception of death are decoration, not substance: they are there to give the sound of existentialist thunder, but Mailer is firing a popgun . . . loaded with blank cartridges.

The man with big guns and live ammunition is Jakov Lind. The "magic" in *Soul of Wood* is an element of fable, extravagant and horrifying, interwoven with reality to elicit an acute sense of nightmare. Death and the perception of dread live on every page; and perhaps most terrifying of all is his power of making "normal experience" seem like the dream from which we must always and finally awaken to find ourselves in the reality of nightmare. And there is no melodrama here, no bombast—on the contrary, a dispassionate and matter-of-fact tone and a sustained play of grotesque and sardonic humor.

In one story an Austrian doctor travelling in Sweden spends the night with a Lithuanian family of refugees—pale, bloated, ugly—who live completely naked in their overheated house with its piano and television set and other mechanical comforts . . . and eat their own children. In another, the narrator is alone in the compartment of a train with a man who tells him that he is going to kill him, cut him up and eat him as soon as he falls asleep. He describes the process of dissection very precisely and meticulously, and the narrator saves himself only by pulling on the emergency cord, at which point the cannibal lets himself out and disappears in the dark, "Like a country doctor on his way to deliver a baby."

I mention these stories, not because they are the best, although they are very good, but because they suggest something about Lind that one may overlook. His parents were deported and killed after Hitler took over Austria, and since three of these stories, including the title story (which is the longest and most impressive) are about the Nazi experience, one might assume that it is the Nazi experience which he is essentially writing about. To a certain extent this is true, of course, but from this extraordinary book there emerges the warning—never stated, always chillingly implied—that Nazi inhumanity was no aberrant historical explosion, but the manifestation of a brutality which lies just beneath the civilized life we like to think of as normal and which is always liable to erupt. After reading Lind, this is a danger one is never likely to forget.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

F. D. REEVE

An Island of Form

IT DOESN'T MUCH MATTER WHERE YOU START FROM (to paraphrase Montaigne), provided (we add out of our own experience) you have an adequate vehicle. James Merrill's latest vehicle[1] is more than adequate to carry us from the rocks of "the islands of Greece . . . mauve, exhausted blue, tanned rose, here & there crinkled to catch the light" to "the open water. A sun preparing to sink. Other islands." His book is the story of a consciousness making itself, of a self creating sufficiency. Among the novels of our time, it is an island of form.

I admire the skill with which he turns a tale about perhaps irrelevant people into a story about reality. Our lives are the stories we have made ourselves believe about ourselves, the stories in which we are prominent: "We all dream of coming back from the Flea Market with a Fragonard." Our successes are feats of imagination: "I still feel somewhat as if I had brought off a little raid on life, & escaped with my treasure intact."

This short novel is a notebook, with corrections and false starts and paragraphs entered upside down, kept by an "I" as an effort to work toward a final telling of the meaning of, and of his relationship to, events on the island of Diblos (or whatever name he finally chooses to call it) involving his half-brother Yannis-Orson-Orestes, fifteen years older than he, and a handful of people tied to the history of Orson and Dora, their love, marriage, separation—"basta"—crossed by the antagonisms of American and Greek cultures: "The two natures absolutely did not mix. . . . Orestes could teach her nothing. It was as if his very virility were being challenged. . . . Man and wife at last, their relationship was virtually at an end."

But the end of one relationship is the beginning, in a different sense, of another. John-Sandy, the narrator in the third person, cannot *see* the complications which the "I"-narrator cannot avoid. Physically one man, each is, in his form, alone. Each is, as the grammar demands, a different person. As for John-Sandy, "Let him remain gentle, full of sympathy, as if he & his author were quite different people. Aren't they? Would *he* have failed Orestes (or Lucinne, or even Chryssoula)?" Sensual life with its longed-for "reserves of animality," like the fallen leaves, the colors of "fats & vital organs," yields to belief in body, the Platonic table over which O. bends, the idea as self-generative form: "In this spirit he enjoyed both the olive & his idea of it. (From its oil came the light Plato wrote by.)"

"I"-Sandy recounts with modesty and candor how his half-brother

[1] THE (DIBLOS) NOTEBOOK, by *James Merrill*. Atheneum. $4.50.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

returns to (Diblos) to seek, on the island of his dreams, satisfaction from Dora, twenty years older than he, whom he left and who left him in New York after their attempt at America. The events of that return, culminating in Orson-Orestes-O.'s being whipped by Dora's son of her first marriage, lead back through the seven years' story of Orestes' effort to regain, from America, his Greek homeland and, like his mythical namesake, his patrimony: "Betrayal & rejection are what he has always needed in his dealings with people. When Dora didn't answer his letters, what could he do but seek satisfaction at her son's hands?" Through the narrative process, "I"-Sandy discovers himself. By foreshortening, by omission, by digression and distortion, by invention and make-believe, by casting moral judgments as so clearly partial that they seem only opinions, and by making metaphors firm judgments, Merrill makes his story "true." He pretends he is building toward a story. We might rather say that he has torn a story down, into pieces, and by the "etiquette" of art (Aurora in Merrill's play *The Immortal Husband:* "No. No, you don't understand at all. There's a whole etiquette involved") so revolved each of the pieces on its axis that he has created a perfect illusion, as composed and complete as the symbolic Sleeping Woman, a mountain range that "gives the landscape an intense dreamlike quality." This is the form that fits act to meaning, that completes gesture without reliance on faiths that have died or gone bad. In a poem "After Greece," Merrill wrote several years ago

> . . . how I want
> Essentials: salt, wine, olive, the light, the scream—
> No! I have scarcely named you,
> And look, in a flash you stand full-grown before me,
> Row upon row, Essentials,
> Dressed like your sister caryatids. . . .
> . . . . . .
> Stay then. Perhaps the system
> Calls for spirits. This first glass I down
> To the last time
> I ate and drank in that old world. May I
> Also survive its meanings, and my own.

He has set himself the necessary task of measuring the universe, although he knows, bitterly and brilliantly, that the only working tape measure is his own intelligence.

Intelligence in two senses: the constructions of the intellect, as given in the ironically repeated tag in the novel, "The only solution is to be very, very intelligent"; and the information of sensitivity and the commitment of compassion, as given in the *fact* of the slaughter-house:

I thought I was dreaming: the steps, the doorless threshold, the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> nearby rocks, were all spattered & stained with blood. One felt it dripping from within, into the current—some of it fresh enough to have been this morning's. I gathered finally that I had found the slaughterhouse.

The world supplies the essential information, insistently, relentlessly. The mind must give that intelligence its own shape, or else be lost. Either the world makes the mind knuckle under for ineptness (like the under-age poets in the fake Greek-American restaurant, or like Lucinne, a hopelessly fashionable debutante "so passive, any suggestion automatically excludes an alternative"), or the mind cuts the world to its size (like storekeeper Yannis, the Enfant Chic, the Falstaff-and-Charlie Chan of our time, a "small, plump man" with whom Orestes "could have to reckon," the *maitre d.* of our lives). Or the mind, by its *vision,* hops over the world.

Orestes reaches the end of the novel about forty years old, successful in his career as literary critic and lecturer, by Gaia-Athena-Dora's judgment freed from both the Furies' pursuit and the Eumenides' benevolence. But the story of these people's lives has become, really, the substance of "I"-Sandy's consciousness. It is he who is "Rescued!", he who has come through the recognition scene into a new life.

> There are moments when speech is but a mouth pressed
> Lightly and humbly against the angel's hand.

—Merrill ended an earlier poem. An analogous moment, though much more vigorous and imaginative, is the end of "I"-Sandy's *mathema* in this novel:

> *I* was "Dora." *I* was "Orestes." They—whoever "they" were—kept mostly beyond my reach.
>
> "The sun & moon together in the sky."
>
> . . . Blind I go. Love hasn't worked, not this year, & art isn't the answer.

Of course, says this book, there is no "answer," for each next moment, pressing on us, presses us for the apt response, for the proper aesthetic form. Mindless violence and lovely delicacy are equally vital. In this book of high seriousness filled with wit, bright inventiveness, ribaldry, puns, the thwacks of low comedy and the arcane meanings of responsibilities, we have an exceptionally moving and successful story of a self in the world. The book stays with you after you leave it; it possesses you by its awareness of the force of life; you keep returning to it and finding in it turns you had not taken before. It not only adds distinction and scope to the work of one of America's most distinguished poets but also extends possibilities for fiction by (to quote James) "doing the artistic utmost, and thereby . . . *seeing* the general task."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

GERALD WEALES

The Big Show is Always About to Begin

> The French countryside (the countryside of France) was covered with golden grass. I'm looking for a bar, they said, called the Cow on the Roof or something like that.
> —Donald Barthelme, "Will You Tell Me?"
>
> "I live in a little house all by myself," Laura told the lady confidentially, "no one can touch me when I am there. And no one can come in."
> —Bess Streeter Aldrich, *A White Bird Flying*

"IF THE POET HAS A DREAM," Jean Cocteau once wrote, "it is not of becoming famous, but of being believed." There was never a question of fame in Cocteau's case. Long before his death, he had become a personage, a kind of caricature of the poet, a quotable man of letters, the friend of the even more famous—film stars. Like Bernard Shaw, he was saddled with a public image that sometimes got in the way of his works; in the celebrated quarrel over *Bacchus,* he accused François Mauriac of ignoring the play and attacking an idea—a false one—of its author. Also like Shaw, Cocteau helped create the image; think of him, bishop-solemn, decked out in a kind of space helmet, in Hans Richter's *Dreams that Money Can Buy.* In the last few years, Shaw (or his Joey, at least) has been disengaged from his work; the plays have grown as the clown figure dwindled. Nothing like that has happened to Cocteau, even though he has been the subject of a number of recent sympathetic studies. The difficulty with Cocteau, to return to his poet's dream, is that it gets harder and harder to believe him. It has been the chief claim of his work—of any poem, he would say—that there is more there than meets the eye. The most recent collection of Cocteau's plays in translation,[1] a sampling of his work from 1921 to 1951 which contains most of his best plays, confirms—for me, at least—the suspicion that his work is primarily surface.

[1] THE INFERNAL MACHINE AND OTHER PLAYS, by *Jean Cocteau.* New Directions. $6.50. The volume contains new translations of *Orphée* (by John Savacool) and *La Machine infernale* (by Albert Bermel), the latter performed at the Phoenix Theatre in 1958; Dudley Fitt's 1937 translation of *Les Mariés de la Tour Eiffel;* W. H. Auden's version of *Les Chevaliers de la Table Ronde,* prepared for the BBC in 1951; Mary Hoeck's translation of *Bacchus;* and the very brief Speaker's Text of the Stravinsky-Cocteau oratorio, *Oedipus Rex,* in the translation prepared by e. e. cummings for the Juilliard Opera Theatre. This last has little point away from the music and without some idea of the tableaux that Cocteau conceived for the production which he describes in *Journal d'un inconnu* (published in English as *The Hand of a Stranger). Chevaliers* and *Bacchus* are available in English for the first time.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In voicing this suspicion, I place myself among the vulgar or the academic who are unable or unwilling to penetrate the mystery. "Every living work of art has its own ballyhoo," Cocteau wrote in the 1922 Preface to *The Eiffel Tower Wedding Party*,[2] "and only this is seen by those who stay outside." Although this preface is mainly a response to the reactions to *Eiffel Tower*, the sentence I quoted might be a description of Cocteau's first work for the theater, the ballet *Parade*, which was—happily for Cocteau's reputation—something of a scandal when Diaghilev's Ballet Russe first performed it in 1917. The ballet scenario is simple enough. Outside a theater, three music-hall numbers are performed as an advertisement, a come-on, a *parade* for the show inside. The barkers then try, unsuccessfully, to persuade the crowd to enter. When they collapse from their efforts, the performers come out again and "they try to explain in their turn that the show takes place inside." The ballet presumably ends (at least the printed scenario does) with the efforts of the performers to convince the crowd (the audience) that what they have seen is not the whole show. In the *Eiffel Tower* Preface, Cocteau makes it clear that he thinks very few of the crowd will ever get past the *parade*. He suggests that some will be stopped at the door, offended by the surface of the new work (that is, *Eiffel Tower*), "repelled from its true nature by its face." More important, he indicates that a part of the audience is not meant to enter. "The secret of theatrical success is this: you must set a decoy at the door so that part of your audience can amuse themselves there while the rest are inside."

This division between an initiate and an uninitiate audience (more often a division between an innocent, or childlike, audience and one stifled by preconceptions) stretches across Cocteau's career. In that 1922 Preface, he wrote of the new music (the score was by members of *Les Six*): "The ingenuous ear is deceived; it seems to be listening to a café orchestra, but it is as mistaken as would be an eye which could not distinguish between a loud garish material and the same material copied by Ingres." In the 1950's in *Journal d'un inconnu*, he wrote: "a film immediately sets about confusing its secrets, and reveals them only to a few individuals mingled with the crowd which is distracted by the rapid succession of pictures." But is the ingenuous ear always deceived? Music that sounds like a café orchestra may simply be a café orchestra in disguise. A movie may have no secret beyond its succession of images. It is a commonplace in the history of art that a work can be very profound, very revealing behind the simplest of façades. But a façade does not necessarily hide profundity, revelation because the artist makes claims for it. Since Cocteau has such a passion for myth, borrowed or created, it might be well—thinking of him—to remember the case of the emperor's clothes.

[2] In this review, English titles are used for plays that have been translated; French for those not yet available in English.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

That myth is not literally applicable, of course, but myths are malleable. Reinterpreted to fit the Cocteau situation, the fable might be about very real emperor's clothes with a very doubtful emperor inside. At best, it may be an example of clothes making the man, of the emperor being no more than the clothes he wears. If this is the case, it might be useful to look at some of the changes of costume that Cocteau's plays have undergone, to consider the variety of his *parades* and the possibility of a real show, a secret, a truth inside.

His first works for the theater—*Parade, Le Boeuf sur le toit, The Eiffel Tower Wedding Party*—are part of the *avant-garde* reaction to both realistic theater and Maeterlinckian poetic drama, a movement which identifies Cocteau with Jarry and Apollinaire on stage, with the Surrealists, the Cubists, the Dadaists, on and off canvas. Although he later disengaged himself from any artistic school or cause, when he wrote these early works he was plainly part of a band—writers, artists, musicians, performers—who were determined to smash earlier art forms on the theory that the truth of human existence was obscured by conventions. The method was a self-conscious mixture of the arts which was to save the theater from being too literary. In a sense, the names of those he worked with in these early productions tell the story—Picasso, Satie, Massine, Dufy, Milhaud, Auric, Poulenc, Honegger, the Fratellini clowns. The tone was one of play. He quotes happily two remarks that he overheard at the production of *Parade.* The first, from an irate theater director, "We're too old for Punch and Judy." The other, from a man to his wife, "If I had known it was so crazy, I would have brought the children." There is still a kind of second-hand exhilaration to be received from a re-creation of the era, but how have the new illuminations of truth withstood the years? These were as much weapons as works of art and weapons have a way of being discarded (all the music for *Eiffel Tower* has disappeared) or left to rust resplendently on court house lawns. *Parade* and *Le Boeuf* exist only as descriptions, dead mementoes of a lively era, pressed in the pages of Cocteau's *Oeuvres complètes.*

Eiffel Tower—perhaps because it has a spoken text and can more nearly be re-created—retains some of its liveliness. Some of the jokes are still funny; a great deal of the nonsense—the running in and out of the gigantic camera—would probably be amusing in production. Amusing, however, in a period way, like the reconstruction of a chase by the Keystone Cops. The play's most startling device—which does not startle any longer—was its treatment of the actors. These two, who spoke the complete text (the narration and the lines of all the characters) while the dancers mimed the action, were costumed as phonographs and expected to "speak very loudly and quickly, pronouncing each syllable distinctly"—presumably to get an effect more mechanical than human. Now that the shock has gone out of the device and has not been replaced by significance, we can only regard Cocteau's in-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

vention with the kind of affectionate indifference that Marcel Duchamps' cuter constructions are likely to invoke. Although the parody of standard theater pieces (the exit of the ostrich is straight *boulevard* farce) has lost its immediate point, much of the kidding of societal clichés and verbal banalities is still appropriate. Unfortunately, forty years of needling the middle class has made most pin-pricks look alike; the lines are often clever, but they seldom go beneath the surface of their target. In one instance, with one image, Cocteau does cut deep. The general, lecturing on the nature of mirages, is finally pursued and presumably eaten by a lion he insists cannot be real. Here, Cocteau goes beyond mannerism and aims at an attitude of mind (I was watching the extremist debate on the floor of the Republican convention while writing this review). Oddly enough, Cocteau, who so insists on *showing* on stage, unnecessarily explains the image in the funeral oration for the general. *Eiffel Tower* has a very busy surface—Cocteau's attempt to give Diaghilev the "surprise" he asked for—but today the play is little more than that busyness. There is an exchange of lines at the beginning of the play—a comment on the drama Cocteau was out to replace—which has become a kind of accidental epigraph for the work. After the hunter fires into the top of the tower, bringing down a radiogram, Phono I says, "But this radiogram is dead." Phono II: "It's precisely because it's dead that everyone can understand it."

According to Cocteau, it was Raymond Radiguet who "taught me to distrust a new thing if it seemed new, to oppose the fashion of the *avant-garde.*" In any case, the year after *Eiffel Tower,* with his *Antigone,* Cocteau moved to a new *parade*—received myth—as a vehicle for his "secrets." The break was not complete, of course. In *Antigone,* the voice of the Chorus, which also speaks "very loudly and quickly," comes through a hole in the center of the scenery; in *Oedipe-Roi,* the voice seems to be coming through the mouth of a golden statue. These are variations on the phonographs of *Eiffel Tower;* they appear to be stage tricks rather than attempts to give the Chorus a purposeful distancing. Both of these plays follow closely the order of events in their Sophoclean originals. Although Cocteau gives the characters contemporary, informal language, he is presenting the myths, not yet using them. Although he somewhere speaks of Antigone as one of his two anarchistic saints (Joan of Arc is the other) and although his Creon does speak against anarchy, *Antigone* never becomes the kind of struggle that we get in, say, *Intimate Relations (Les Parents terribles)* where the fight is in terms of "order" and "disorder."

With *Orpheus* and *The Infernal Machine,* the two most important of his plays using Greek material, Cocteau actually uses the myths for his own purposes. Critics are fond of quoting Henry Bidou's description of *Orpheus* as "a meditation on death," but Death in the play is only part device, part gag. Given Cocteau's concept of poetic creativ-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ity, a kind of seizure in which the invisible poem forces the poet to make him almost visible (see "On the Birth of a Poem" in *Journal d'un inconnu*), the play seems to be about poetry: the poet's need for possession—by a false demon (the horse) or a true angel (Heurtebise); the necessary and occasionally malevolent misinterpretation of his work; his deification for the wrong reasons on the wrong occasions. Cocteau calls *Orpheus* a tragedy, but it comes out comic to me. The last scene, in heaven—in which Orpheus, now as excited about Heurtebise as he was about the horse, still orders Eurydice around like a servant—makes it impossible for me to accept the suggestion that the play is seriously about the poet's longing for death, his inability to free himself from the veils that life pulls over his intuitions. Besides, *Orpheus* is more intent on theatricality than truth; its virtues are Death's magic act, the hocus-pocus with mirrors, Heurtebise's floating in mid-air, the slapstick with the poet's head.

Like *Orpheus, The Infernal Machine* is less serious than it seems to be. In the Speaker's Text of *Oedipus Rex,* the hero is described as "a plaything of the heartless gods." Cocteau seems to have set out to illustrate that description in *The Infernal Machine.* The cruel inevitability of what happens to Oedipus is emphasized throughout the play, particularly in the bridges that the Voice provides between acts. Of what significance is a concept of implacable Fate to the contemporary world? Cocteau makes no attempt to read the myth for his time, and a concept that must have been important to Sophocles becomes a theatrical mechanism for the French playwright. There is an apparent shift at the end, when Tiresias says that Oedipus now belongs "To the people, to poets, to pure hearts," in which the play seems suddenly to be talking about literature and myth, rather than being them, but Cocteau's use of Fate has made the play no more than an exercise from the beginning. Compare, for instance, the dramatic irony of Sophocles, in which Oedipus' every word condemns him, with the easy, almost silly irony of Cocteau's constant references to Jocasta's fatal scarf, her being old enough to be the mother of Oedipus, the possibility of the Sphinx's being a pretty girl. The thing that makes *The Infernal Machine* a good play is that it has several good scenes—Jocasta and the young soldier on the battlement, Oedipus and the Sphinx, Jocasta and Oedipus on their wedding night—and at least one outstanding characterization—Oedipus as a very vain boy. These, again, are the virtues of *parade.*

As early as 1930, the year before *The Infernal Machine,* Cocteau began, with *The Human Voice,* to find a new surface for his plays, to write in the most conventional forms. In *Opium,* he calls that play "an ugly one-acter, an entry of appearance against the aesthetes, the snobs and the young . . . " It is, as he admits, the battle of *Eiffel Tower* turned inside out: "It is not the public which one must shock, but the elite." By the end of the decade, he was fully settled in the new-old

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

theater; between 1938 and 1946 he turned out psychological drama (*Intimate Relations*), back-stage romance (*The Holy Terrors*), a detective story (*The Typewriter*) and romantic melodrama (*The Eagle Has Two Heads*). All of these have philosophical overtones, of course, and one of them—*Intimate Relations*—is a superior play of its sort. The key to what is really going on in these plays can be found in the Preface to *The Typewriter,* in which Cocteau announces that he is trying "To write obvious plays with subtlety and with great parts for great actresses." The difficulty, in most cases, is that they remain obvious and, in the absence of superior performers, become distressingly commonplace. I can imagine *The Human Voice* as a kind of tour-de-force in the hands of Cocteau's "great actress," but the only time I saw it, it was as tiresome as it is banal.

At first glance, it looks as though Cocteau, as a playwright, has moved from *avant-garde* playfulness, to mythical drama, to conventional theater. In a way, he has, but there is a more important division in his work. The mythic plays tend to break into two groups, those—like *Orpheus*—which are allied to the early Cocteau theatrical works, and those—like *The Infernal Machine*—which belong to the conventional plays. The link in the second instance is that *Machine* is as obviously a performer's play (Jocasta is a great part for a great actress) as *Orpheus* is a stage technician's play. *The Knights of the Round Table* (1937), which depends not at all on the English myths which lend it a few names, is of interest (if it is) not because it is another look at the Cocteau poet, but because it provides three juicy dual roles. Up to the end of the 1920's, Cocteau seemed primarily interested in mechanical trickery, decor, masks, costumes and non-speaking performers (mimes, dancers); beginning in the 1930's, he started to think in terms of the bravura performer, the star turn. His work for the theater, then, becomes all of a piece. He is a theatrical journeyman, preoccupied with the mechanics of his trade, dependent for his best effects on someone outside himself, a dealer in surfaces not secrets. At his best—*Orpheus, The Infernal Machine, Intimate Relations*—he can be very good (at least, for the length of a scene), but the pleasure one takes in his work is marred by the barker (remember Cocteau played the Voice in the first performances of *Antigone* and *The Infernal Machine*) who tries to lure us inside.

"The true Symbol is never planned," Cocteau wrote in the Preface to *Eiffel Tower;* "it emerges by itself. . . ." So it is with *Parade.* We now know that there is no show inside.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ROGER SALE

New Poems, Ancient and Modern

MUCH RECENT POETRY IN TRANSLATION is from sources so foreign that it would be only disingenuous to consider it with the domestic volumes. There are three books from the Spanish, a slim item translated from Israeli by an Indian, a volume by the President of Senegal, an anthology of modern Indonesian poetry, and a beautiful collection of Korean verse.[1] Gradually it is being assumed we really are capable of taking in all such things, and, if read with some sense that a judgment would be impertinent, we probably can. Certainly this offers no problem:

> Between present and future happiness
> The abyss gapes.
> My girl is licking at her ice cream:
> This afternoon you're my love,
> I adorn you with coca-cola
> Oh wife-in-training.
> We have stopped the clocks' ticking.
>
> ("Tuti's Ice Cream")

This is by a man his translators call the father of modern Indonesian poetry, Chairil Anwar (1922-1949); if both the judgment and the translation are accurate, Indonesia is not half as far away as Sukarno would like. Anwar is about as alien as W. D. Snodgrass, and those who read him or his successors in search of a presumably alien culture will be sorely disappointed. But after recovering from the shock of such simple recognition, I found the book great fun:

> Like my mother, and my grandmother too,
> Plus seven generations before them,
> I also seek admission to heaven,
> Which the Moslem Party and the Mohammedan Party say
> has rivers of milk
> And thousands of houris all over.
>
> ("Heaven")

[1] AN ANTHOLOGY OF MODERN INDONESIAN POETRY, edited by *Burton Raffel*. Univ. of California Press. $4.00. SELECTED POEMS, by *Léopold Sédar Senghor*. Atheneum. $3.95. ANTHOLOGY OF KOREAN POETRY, translated by *Peter H. Lee*. John Day. $5.00. THE BRASS SERPENT, by *T. Carmi*. Ohio State Univ. Press. $4.00. SELECTED POEMS OF GABRIELA MISTRAL, translated by *Langston Hughes*. Indiana Univ. Press. $1.75. THE GARDEN IN THE EVENING, by *Antonio Machado*. The Review, 1/. THREE HUNDRED POEMS, by *Juan Ramón Jiménez*. Univ. of Texas Press. $5.00.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

This is more than can be claimed for Léopold Sédar Senghor, the Senegal President. Though he writes and obviously cares deeply about Africa, he is really a French poet, good, apparently minor and certainly derivative; depending on the circumstances, he will sound either like Claudel or Whitman. If it is impossible to imagine Tubman or L. B. Johnson writing poetry of any kind, it is not possible to praise Senghor as a poet beyond saying he is a man of culture and feeling.

Altogether more interesting is Peter H. Lee's *Anthology of Korean Poetry,* and not just because his translations keep us from calling Korea a version of the familiar. Although he may have done so consciously, Lee has translated two thousand years of Korean verse so the reader can feel a real passing of time as he moves through the book. The earliest poems are simply scraps shrouded in mist, but then, as a form called the *sijo* is developed, it becomes easier to see what the poets thought a poem was. The *sijo,* like the *haiku,* is a short poem which every educated person could write for almost any occasion. But the form is blessedly longer than the *haiku,* a three-line stanza usually (in this volume, at least) repeated once, and the result, though gnomic enough, does not have to be read blankly. Here, for instance, it is possible to recognize the close of what must have been a splendid party:

> The moon hung in the sky, bright, full.
> Since the dawn,
> It has met wind and frost.
> Alas, it will soon sink.
> But no, wait, I say,
> And shine on the gold cup of a drunken guest.

One sees simultaneously that this is a poem and that no one he knows would ever write one like it. That, it seems to me, is more than one has any right to expect in this kind of enterprise. The twentieth century verse is altogether more western, imagistic, and apparently ordinary, but no matter—Lee is to be congratulated, and thanked.

The quality of seeming alien does not really disappear as we move closer home, but the sensation is not as pleasant. Gabriela Mistral was an immensely popular folk poetess who wrote simply and sentimentally about mother and mother earth. It is hard not to feel both warmly and patronizingly toward her, and had she not come from Chile, giving her the Nobel Prize would have been like giving it to Carl Sandburg. T. Carmi is an Israeli poet of apparently some consequence, but on the basis of this very slim book, it is not easy to see why. In these translations he is usually obscure, and, when clear, almost incredibly harmless. But Antonio Machado and Juan Ramón Jiménez have been handled with too much respect by too many people to be treated so lightly. Neither has been so well treated in these present volumes, however, as to be given the courtesy of translations with the originals on facing pages. To ask for this with languages as remote as Indonesian

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

or Korean may seem a bit much, but Spanish is another matter, especially when each of these books leaves enough blank paper on each page to accommodate the original easily. I find it difficult to speak about the poems themselves. As one with only a beginning Spanish, I can say that line by line neither poet is difficult to read, and yet, when I finish a poem I seldom have any sense that I have been anywhere. Unfortunately too, neither Eloise Roach's quite literal Jiménez nor Colin Flack's loose Machado is able to deliver me from this sense that I am reading fragments. Both poets are huddled and protective in the way symbolist poets usually are; both seem to cultivate rather than to express themselves. The lines are obviously meant to capture glimpses and feelings with terse precision, yet since they do not have that effect on me, the best I can offer is what seem to be among the best poems. Here is Machado:

The afternoon glows peacefully
And the air is enchanted.
The white stork dreams overhead,
And spreading their wings in the golden wind
The swallows weave into the dusk.

One of them turns like an arrow,
His wings sharp in the darkening air,
Seeking his black corner on the roof.

Calm and transfigured
The white stork
Hangs on the bell-tower like a gallows.

Here is Jiménez:

Solitude is lonely.
And only the lone one finds it
on finding the lonely wave
in the lone sea moving in.

And so we return home, where Donald Hall, Hollis Summers, and the rest write poems.[2] These are familiar names, none is among those whom any but closest friends would place at the peak of contemporary verse, yet all find publishers easily enough, all find at least some friendly reviewers, all return rather dutifully to the standard subjects —ordinary landscapes bleakly faced, bizarre landscapes bravely con-

[2] ROOTS AND BRANCHES, by *Robert Duncan*. Scribner's. $4.50. SEVEN OCCASIONS, by *Hollis Summers*. Rutgers Univ. Press. $3.75. PRETENDING NOT TO SLEEP, by *Ian Hamilton*. The Review. 1/. A ROOF OF TIGER LILIES, by *Donald Hall*. Viking. $3.50. NOTHING FOR TIGERS, by *Hayden Carruth*. Macmillan. $3.95. THE LOST WORLD, by *Randall Jarrell*. Macmillan. $3.95. DEATH OF THE KAPOWSIN TAVERN, by *Richard F. Hugo*. Harcourt, Brace & World. $3.95.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

fronted, daughters and divorced wives far away, friends recently deceased, a wife in bed at four in the morning, the awfulness and inevitability of middle class culture and atomic disaster. Each of these seven books is competent enough (as contrasted to the incompetence of such other recent volumes as those by Paul Engle, Irving Feldman, or Mary Oliver), none is really like the others, yet all raise approximately the same questions. In a short poem, why was it written at all? In slightly longer pieces, what sustains beyond the writer's will to go on? Are there any signs that the writer really thought about the next word or line? Need all coherent poems be flat and all excited poems be incomprehensible? Must every sharp break in meter or stanza announce a grim irony? Taken one book at a time the usual distinction between cooked and uncooked poetry still has its value, but no attempt at real distinctions can stop there. For one's overwhelming sense, be the poet wild or academic, is that these are poets by habit now as much as by desire. You sit one of them down in front of something and he will write a poem about it. Some can even spin them out of nothing at all. Thus all write a great deal and in a not altogether admirable sense their subject is writing poems. Faced with this profusion and this artistic assurance that seems to override even the most agonized sensibility, one can only look for poems that seem chosen rather than willed.

For instance, Robert Duncan and Hollis Summers should seem poles apart, but finally they do not. Here is Duncan, the Black Mountaineer:

> Hail! forgotten and witherd souls!
>
> Our Mother comes with us to gather her children!
>
> Now it is time for Hell
> to nurse at the teats of Heaven.
>
> Dark sucks at the white milk.
>
> Stars flow out into the deserted souls.
>
> In our dreams we are drawn towards day once more.
>
> ("Osiris and Set")

Only Duncan will ever know why the words are arranged and spaced as they are or how precisely one can or should read an image like "stars flew out into the deserted souls." No amount of sympathetic reading can dispel the overwhelming sense of arbitrariness. But after a while it is reassuring to discover that Duncan does not care how good his poems are. They follow the patterns of his mind, nothing else, and anyone who writes this way is cheerfully oblivious of all who are not

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

kindred spirits. Nothing is more serious than a Duncan poem, yet little asks so completely to be read as a kind of sport. Every reader will probably be able to follow along his curious paths for a passage or even a whole poem, and then the shout becomes a kind of song. To read Duncan in bulk is to become oneself an action painter, and for that process to work, nothing can be very clear. To believe in him, I should think, is to be quite mad.

Stopping just short of that destination, we turn to Hollis Summers' *Seven Occasions:*

> We know, of course, the world will last until
> Every nation gets a chance at the Gospel.
> I do not have at hand the latest official
>
> Figures, but I am safe in saying the Word
> Has pretty well gotten around. October,
> or early November, will end our calendar.
>
> It will be dark, around four A.M.,
> A rooster will crow twice, and then,
> Bong, the world will end.
>
> ("The September Afternoon Trees")

So, another version of Arthur C. Clarke's "The Nine Million Names of God," and, like that story, this is impressive for its neatness and good form. Summers has no illusions about himself. He writes a kind of light verse, and if a little at a time goes a long way, each poem does have its pleasures, the volume can be read all the way through, and the best can be reread without an accompanying sense that the poem disappears when its trick is made out. He is not, though, really all that different in effect from Robert Duncan; for all his geniality and Duncan's wheezing, I felt as I finished both books that their authors were just making their way in the world by being poets.

Ian Hamilton and Donald Hall are presumably more sizable quantities, yet the reasons for this presumption have little to do with their poetry. Hamilton is editor of *the Review,* which seems at this distance England's best little magazine these days; thus he is able to publish his own poems in a pamphlet for a shilling, a price not commensurate with their worth but much closer to a sensible figure than the outsize prices an American publisher would charge for the same fourteen poems. Here is the first poem in the collection, written in a very curious sonnet form:

> You say that ghosts invade your peace at night.
> That waking when it's barely light
> You shrink to find your curtains fly
> Or pale, alert, you catch some sly
> Proud move there at the door. You say

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

All this at me now. "Look," I try,
"There's nothing there you couldn't tame
As meek as these rough hands that strain
Above you now. Look, see them. Call their name."
I touch you to be calm again.
To turn. "Come turn," I plead. But no.
And when I move, you say "No more.
"I'll have no more these talons at my thigh."
Then crane over me, frantic seeking the light.

("Fears")

This is quite good as a miniature horror story, but one suspects Hamilton wants to think of it as a genuine lyric moment, in which case even an admirer notes the high cliché density.

Hall is slim in a different way. His anthologies, almost regardless of their selections, have done much to make a lot of good poetry generally available, and yet, or perhaps because of the breadth of his reading, his poems seem written to fit some notion he has of the kind of poem that should be written now. *A Roof of Tiger Lilies,* thus, is a book pruned of any high-flying language, but the result is both flat and pretentious:

Today they cut down the oak.
Strong men climbed the ropes
on the brittle tree.
The exhaust of a gasoline saw
was blue in the branches.

It is February. The oak has been dead a year.
I remember the great sails of its branches
rolling out greenly, a hundred and twenty feet up,
and acorns thick on the lawn.
Nine cities of squirrels lived in that tree.
Today they ran over the snow
squeaking their lamentation.

("The Stump")

Surely only someone with theories would think this was poetry at all. The reasons for holding such theories are clear enough; when you are wearied of west coast vaticism and the sentimentality of the poets still to be considered, you might be tempted to use words like "spare," "lean," or even "astringent" to describe Hall's pressureless verse. But on the whole, I'd rather be in Philadelphia.

Which is not to say that Hayden Carruth and Randall Jarrell are not sentimental; it is only to claim that unlike Duncan they want to write poems others can read as well as dance with, and unlike Hamilton and Hall they are willing to risk the obvious charges. Carruth's *Nothing for Tigers* is his fifth volume in six years, much too much—he seems to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

do nothing but travel and write poems at such a breakneck pace he cannot possibly tell when he is writing well. He is the most obvious instance of the phenomenon mentioned above, a poet by habit. As such he does not seem to have realized that his rhymed poems are almost all bad because he cannot keep them free of irrelevant detail:

> Darling, then as the leaves plunged down
> I knew the peril of such deep giving
> (Leaves of aspen, leaves of rowan)
> And the uselessness of such retreiving
> Under a woods gone all nut-brown.
>
> ("Existence Before Essence")

But when Carruth drops the rhyme, he often begins to move. Here is the close of a monologue spoken by Abelard:

> Dear Lord, I love you. I, no man, no man,
> Castrato squeaking from the guilty knife,
> Flesh of no gender, tumor swelling here,
> Alien, a shame, a shortcoming, tub of fat.
> And I groan with love. Lord, was it that gay knife,
> Dancing on me like the finger of last desire,
> That struck the fear of man into my heart?
> Fear is a saving, most instructive love.
> I thank you on my rotting knees this morning.
> For all our wounds, each stroke done and received,
> Without which not one man could heal again.
>
> ("Abelard at St. Denis")

This sounds like hordes of other poets, "gay knife Dancing" is a baroque image gone wrong, and "rotting knees" makes no sense. But the writer wants his lines to move, to keep redefining a matter of some urgency, and he is willing to lurch into countless incongruities. If Carruth were a better or even a more controlled poet, the last line would ring as he so obviously wants it to. As it is one must discount its effortful flashiness before one can begin to hear it right. If the effort seems too great, then maybe the very next poem, about his estranged daughter, will be more convincing:

> While she lay asleep,
> I watched. I think no other vision
> Of helplessness can make me want to creep
> So much to prayer, though my contrition,
> For all its grave validity, leaves me still
> A man who cannot pray. To whom
> Must I speak, then? To Chance? To Time?
> Hear how I wish her wise and beautiful.
>
> ("Pseudo-Prayer")

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Carruth has been too busy writing to learn much of wisdom and beauty that is not maudlin, but still, at many places in this book one can imagine him transformed from writing poetry to writing poems.

Randall Jarrell, jaunty, cheerful, once born, already knows how to write the poems he can write, so probably only a confirmed enemy of his manner would not prefer *The Lost World* to the volumes mentioned above. He writes of his home and his memories without ever beginning to want to apologize because his life has been pretty generally unremarkable, and this can be a very winning quality. He cares so little if you patronize him that after a while no one could possibly want to. Certainly no one else this quarter could be as breezy as this:

> When, like Disraeli, I murmur
> That you are more like a mistress than a wife,
> More like an angel than a mistress; when, like Satan,
> I hiss in your ear some vile suggestion,
> Some delectable abomination,
> You smile at me indulgently: "Men, men!"
>
> You smile at mankind, recognizing in it
> The absurd occasion of your fall.
>
> ("Woman")

A poem thus begun cannot modulate far without disaster, but Jarrell knows how far he can go:

> You look at us out of sunshine and shade,
> Dappled, inexorable, the last human power.
> All earth is the labyrinth along whose ways
> You walk mirrored: rosy-fingers, many-breasted
> As Diana of the Ephesians, strewing garments
> Before the world's eyes narrowed in desire.
> Now, naked on my doorstep, in the sun
> Gold-armed, white-breasted, pink-cheeked, and black-furred
> You call to me, "Come"; and when I come say "Go,"
> Smiling your soft contrary smile. . .
>
> He who has these
> Is secure from the other sorrows of the world.
> While you are how am I alone? Your voice
> Soothes me to sleep, and finds fault with my dreams,
> Till I murmur in my sleep: "Man is the animal
> That finds fault."
>
> And you say: "Who said that?"

For all its relaxed ease, it is verse like this that really deserves adjectives like "lean" and "spare." Furthermore, the long sequence of the title poem builds up some really stunning effects. If Lowell and Roethke are major poets, Jarrell is minor indeed, but put him beside

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

our other bards of the household—John Ciardi, maybe, or Edward Albee—and he suddenly seems unique.

Richard F. Hugo is the opposite of Jarrell—humorless, solipsistic, embedded in his landscape and unable to move in a world with people. As becomes a man who knows what he can do, Jarrell seems to think no better of himself than a good reader does, whereas it would take an intrepid reader indeed to take Hugo's tough, haughty manner with anything like his valuation of it. But I hope it is not simply that his country, the northwest, is my own that leads me to feel that here is a poet on the verge of great successes. Like the others, he is an habitual poet, but in short bursts he can leave them behind:

> To know is to be alien to rivers.
> This river helped me play an easy role—
> to be alone, to drink, to fail.
> The world goes on without money.
>
> ("Duwamish Head")

> If, when the freeway opens, a man
> afraid of speed still takes this road,
> the faded Under New Management sign
> might mean to him: we are older too—
> live here—we'll never treat you badly again.
>
> ("What the Brand New Freeway Won't Go By")

> Without a shield of hills, a barricade
> of elms, one resorts to magic, hiding
> the joker well behind the gesturing hand.
> Childish wars continue in our minds.
> Paint is the gray it was in Carthage.
>
> ("In Stafford Country")

The Stafford country here is approximately Kansas, but Stafford is also master of Hugo's own country and is, in many ways, Hugo's master. The fact can remind us that Hugo does not really sustain a whole poem as Stafford does in "Travelling Through the Dark," "Lake Chelan," or "Thinking of Berky." The reason for this seems to derive from a kind of arrogant athleticism in Hugo that refuses to supply or indicate connectives between lines, sentences, or stanzas, or to care if a poem starts with one subject and ends with another. The result is an air that insists the reader is at fault when a poem doesn't quite come off. But he has at least one poem to which almost none of these strictures apply, and it is my choice for the best of the season:

> On cliffs above the town, high homes disdain
> what is not Victorian below
> but Indian or cruel. A plaque declares
> a chapel older than the town.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

(Many worship God before they're born.)
The Keystone ferry sails without a car,
a passenger, or even trailing gulls.
The pulp mill shoots bad odor at the sun.

Arriving here is feeling some old love—
half a memory—a silly dream of how
a war would end, a world would settle down
with time for hair to gray before you die.
The other half of memory is sight.
The cliffs will hold another thousand years.
The town is rotting every Sunday night.

A novel fakes its start in every bar,
gives way to gin and talk. The talk gives way
to memories of elk, and elk were never here.
Freighters never give this town a second look.
The dead are buried as an afterthought
and when the tide comes glittering with smelt
the grebes have gone to look for meaty ports.

("Port Townsend")

Hugo is completely immersed in his landscape; all he knows can be expressed in the motion from one line—"what is not Victorian below" —to the next—"Is Indian or cruel." The movement is so insistent that it ruthlessly reveals any falsity, such as the flashiness of the parenthesis or the last two lines of the second stanza. But such insistence is what so many poems need and few have. A town is filled in the same motion that it is emptied out—"The talk gives way to memories of elk, and elk were never here"—so that finally its riches are all in the poem and not in the town at all; the grebes, thus, miss out on the smelt. A new poem this good, it does not matter much how good it is.

Someone full of balanced judgments and good will can easily reply that if this is the best of twenty new volumes of poems then poetry is a minor art indeed these days. That may well be; the average good novel is probably better than the average good book of poems, assuming such judgments are possible. Poetry has become more standarized as its audience has become respectably stabilized; there are more poets, as it were, than there are poems. Nonetheless, Randall Jarrell is a pleasure to read, Richard F. Hugo is a poet with a good present and a bright future—and *A Far Field* and *For the Union Dead* are not yet a year old.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

JOSEPH KERMAN

Opera Misconstrued

I DO NOT THINK THAT MISS BROPHY KNOWS quite what she is up to in this book.[1] She has some striking and original ideas about the way Mozart's operas reflect his and his century's psychosexuality, but she is constantly shifting ground as to whether this information should be treated as criticism, biography, or sociology. She is as seduced as a sophomore by *Kulturgeschichte* — in her case, by a feminist Freudian *Kulturgeschichte* — but her extended references to Pope, Tiepolo, Jane Austen, Voltaire, *Les Liaisons Dangereuses, Paul et Virginie,* Thomas Love Peacock, Mozart, etc., get hopelessly side-tracked and tangled up. In general she makes herself hard to follow. Some chapters are two pages long, some nearly forty; *The Magic Flute* is analyzed in two practically rigorous long chapters, but one has to hunt for *Così fan tutte* among various obscurely named ones. The writing resembles stream of consciousness more than argument, a great jumble of exhaustingly clever remarks. Miss Brophy may not realize how strong an impression of intellectual exhibitionism her book creates; I am reminded of her own analysis of the role of the virtuoso woman singer in opera. Obviously she is a very bright person and awesomely well read, but unself-critical to an equally awesome degree. She can innocently write

> Indeed, to my ear, though not, I know, to everyone's, this aria ["Mi tradì" from *Don Giovanni*] is so remarkably Bach-like that I think Mozart must have been musically archaising; and this perhaps is a sign, unconsciously given, that his extramusical thoughts had also gone back in time—to the performance he had witnessed seven years before of an out-of-date play by Shakespeare. Certainly it is in "Mi tradì" that the influence of *Hamlet* expresses itself most strongly: "Mi tradì" is, in fact, an epitome of all Hamlet's soliloquies.

Of course there is nothing in the least Bach-like about "Mi tradì," as, one gathers, Miss Brophy's friends have all been trying to tell her. The innocence consists in assuming that any impression, no matter how private, is worth throwing in pell-mell, as though a book were an analytic session.

The above passage catches the eye as one of extremely few about Mozart's music; Miss Brophy writes so interestingly about his erections and lavatory training that I was looking especially for comments of comparable sensitivity about the music. It is certainly my experience

[1] MOZART THE DRAMATIST, by *Brigid Brophy*. Harcourt, Brace & World. $5.95.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that revealing things can be and have been written about opera by people who are not professional musicians, that indeed the literary sensibility has a great deal to offer music criticism. But can you—ought you—write about Mozart if you can't tell Mozart from Bach? Can you write a book about Tiepolo if you are color-blind? what kind of a book?

Because it will ignore the artistic medium in question, in the deepest sense it will be a superficial book, even though in a superficial sense it may be probing the "deepest" motives. *Mozart the Dramatist* does not engage with Mozart's operas as such, as works of art in their integrity, and it does not even offer an account of the dramatic aspects of Mozart's operas, in spite of its title. No effort is made to isolate and treat all the important dramatic themes or events. So in *Figaro,* Miss Brophy speaks at length (and well) about seduction, but not about the epiphany at the forgiveness scene near the end. In *Don Giovanni* she notices an Oedipal Hamlet situation, but not the fantastic personal integrity of the Don confronted by the Statue. In *Così fan tutte* she draws an arresting parallel between the sisters and the Weber sisters between whom Mozart's affections vaccilated, but ignores the feelings expressed by sisters and suitors when they find themselves and the others untrue.

The best one can say is that this book treats the myths or stories underlying the Mozart operas, and then not always fully. But an opera is more than a myth. Miss Brophy sees the distinction (at one time or another she acknowledges almost every facet of the problems she raises, without accepting the responsibility of dealing with them). In the course of an elaborate and even persuasive study of the Pasha Selim, whom she regards as the key figure in *The Abduction from the Seraglio,* she stops to note that he never sings:

> although he is peculiarly detached from the *opera* because he is not a singing part, the Pasha is much more closely involved with the *story* than Sarastro, who is a mere figurehead . . .

This is so Irish of Miss Brophy. Since the discourse of the Pasha exists on the colorless level of non-music, far below the imaginative plane of other people in the piece, he has no authority of any kind, whether personal or philosophical, whether as character or observer. As Miss Brophy would put it, he has been effectively castrated by Mozart and the librettist, and Constanze simply makes herself ridiculous by her hysterical reactions to his threats of rape. Miss Brophy does likewise, building everything on aspects of the opera that would remain the same if it had been composed by Handel or Dittersdorf, or if it had never been set to music at all.

It is too bad, intellectually speaking, that Miss Brophy is obsessed with sex; Freudian analysis is a dangerous stimulant for an exuberant and undisciplined mind such as hers. The idea of hidden motives and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

their repression allows her to flit licentiously back and forth between any intellectual construction and its opposite. For instance, if the Age of the Enlightenment is characterized by the killing of father-figures, every time someone in an opera is killed that can be a sign of the times, and every time someone isn't that can be evidence of repression. If further we postulate Mozart's basic ambivalence towards his Age, those of his works that cannot be interpreted as pro-Enlightenment can be interpreted as anti. After discovering covert and contradictory sexual motives in every situation, comes the really serious work of discovering a criterion of relevance among them—doubtless as serious in psychoanalysis as in cultural and artistic analysis. In art, at least, a criterion exists in what the artist has chosen to present. Don Giovanni can easily be construed as a parricide, a prevaricating Hamlet who awaits the castration expected by all boys as punishment for Oedipal wishes, but the point is, how, in Mozart's opera, do his actions or his attitudes accord with such a construction? Nothing in the libretto or the music gives support to the idea that Don Giovanni reacts to the Commendatore, dead or alive, as to a father. Unlike Hamlet, he does not go through any "To be or not to be"; but, says Miss Brophy with a quite delightful wriggle, Hamlet's soliloquies are put in the mouth of Donna Elvira, thus illustrating opera's characteristic emphasis on women. "Certainly [that 'certainly'!] it is in 'Mi tradì' that the influence of *Hamlet* expresses itself most strongly . . ."

An opera is both less and more than a myth. If a motive is so far repressed as not to be articulated in the work of art, nothing is gained by bringing it to the surface. Criticism is not psychoanalysis. Art does not need to be healed.

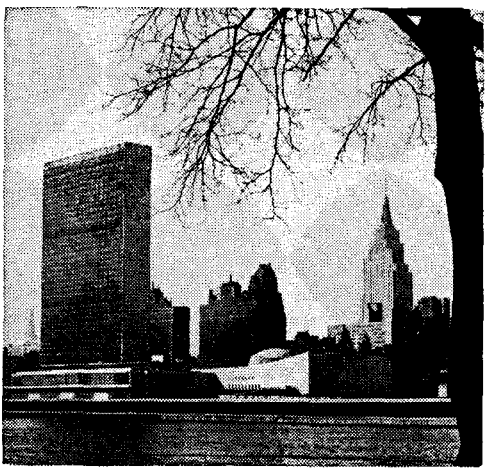
The least Freudian part of the book, inded, is the solidest, as well as the most closely—or anyhow, the least loosely—argued. In the section entitled, with characteristic aplomb, " 'Die Zauberflöte' Solved," Miss Brophy is dealing for once with an overtly allegorical piece with clear mythological underpinnings. She turns from amateur psychoanalysis and amateur criticism to—suddenly—amateur scholarship, offering a new theory to account for the well-known confusions of the libretto. The problem is complex and I would suppose too specialized to discuss in a review—and still far from solution. Still this time the basic argument seems to me persuasive, even though, very interestingly, it assumes much the same form as the surrounding Freudian discourse. The thought is that the original plot had to be changed because, in depiciting the initiation ceremonies in hell, it became too overtly Masonic; which cannot be proved because the Masonic rites remain secret. Even in a non-Freudian setting, Miss Brophy finds herself dealing with "repression" of an unknowable.

A strange book, a strange author, and a *very* strange author's picture on the dust-cover. In the middle ground, soberly clad, sits Miss Brophy, who one can see must clearly be nicer-looking than she appears here

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

with her eyes averted and with the light playing around her mouth in such a way as to make her look older. In center focus is a bright little girl who points with trembling finger at Miss Brophy's lap, the direction also of Miss Brophy's gaze. As though to screen this blunt sexual reference, a plane object is placed edgewise on her knees—doubtless a child's drawing, since to the left another one is displayed, representing three girls dancing in bouffant skirts (repressed Graces?). Court ladies of the Enlightenment would have themselves painted by Nattier or Vigée-Lebrun in the roles of Venus, Hera, Psyche, or Galatea. Miss Brophy has herself photographed as Erda, but as *Urmutter* of artist girl-children only who draw girl-children only. Also as Pallas Athena, perhaps: on the exact level of her ears, a coarse diagonal swings all the way across the back of the photograph—a very heavily-laden bookshelf skewering her brain. Exquisitely, this bookshelf is tilted well off level.

My thoroughly amateur iconographic study has a slightly serious point. A good photograph should presumably show us what Miss Brophy looks like, not distribute clues about her self-image as mind and mother. Consciously or—is it possible?—unconsciously, she has quite misconstrued what photography is about; as she has done with opera.



NEW YORK'S TURTLE BAY OLD & NEW

by Edmund T. Delaney

This is the history of a section of New York City bounded by 41st and 51st Sts. from the East River to Third Ave., roughly marking the limits of three of the finest farms on Old Manhattan. The hub of this area is the United Nations complex resting on filled land which scarcely 100 years ago was the lovely cove called Turtle Bay. From early Dutch days to the present, this story chronicles the growth and changes of this region's most fascinating people and places. 85 illustrations.

L.C.C. No. 65-16658—$5.95

"The Delaney study is the sort of contribution of which we need many others."

James Grote Van Derpool, Exec., Dir.,
N. Y. Landmarks Preservation Commission

BARRE PUBLISHERS SOUTH STREET BARRE, MASSACHUSETTS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MARVIN MUDRICK

The Modern and How It Grew

"LOTS OF LAUGHS?" INQUIRED A FRIEND, regarding from a prudent distance this dictionary-sized volume.[1] If he had opened it at the index to its thousand big pages of small print, he might have counted two hundred and thirty-two selections from one hundred and one authors. Almost all these snippets from more or less celebrated documents are "discursive statements" (as the editors announce in the Preface) rather than "the dominant images, the obsessive concretions of character, action, and language," because "preserving this level of abstraction, one may often glimpse more readily the structures common to both image and idea, artistic purpose and historical cause." We're in for it, then, it's nothing so simple as art; and so much of it turns out to be a rubble of manifestoes and cultural history, glum and self-persuaded, as somniferously prescriptive as the editors' prose, sunk under posterity's dead weight like Nobel Prize speeches and ceremonies at the unveiling of French monuments, a Bartlett's and Bible for literary cocktail parties.

So much of it is a parade of squares, including of course that quadrilateral of *Kulturbonzen* Freud and Jung, Goethe and Mann, the last of whom is represented as usual by lectures in honor of somebody or other whose name he customarily forgets while explaining how he himself managed to manufacture yet another Teutonic masterpiece. Even Dada and Surrealism sound, in this context, like programs at any institute of advanced humanistic studies. One yearns for an unreliable, a Wilhelm Reich or a Wyndham Lewis (neither of them admitted), to stick a pin into some vast behind; not Henry Miller (as here) disguised in Sir James G. Frazer's frock coat and carrying on about the sacred mysteries of Greece; a parodist, perhaps, like Beerbohm (also absent), whose exquisite hatchet-job on Goethe ("Quia Imperfectum") is light-years beyond anything by Goethe here, when for instance it quotes the master on the art of heroic painting: " 'It takes no little time,' writes Goethe to Frau von Stein, 'merely to cover so large a field of canvas with colours.' " But to juxtapose this ass with Eckermann's Apollo, or Freud's love letters with his lucubrations on the death-drive, would perhaps demolish the editors' lath-and-plaster Olympus; would certainly throw a cruel light on questionable solemnities.

The solemnities are occasionally indistinguishable from sanctimony. Under the auspices of nineteenth-century science, Zola inaugurates

[1] THE MODERN TRADITION: BACKGROUNDS OF MODERN LITERATURE, edited by *Richard Ellmann* and *Charles Feidelson, Jr.* Oxford University Press. $13.75.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"the experimental novel" with groveling reliance on "the rigidity of scientific truth"; and Darwin, having just uttered the loudest sentence of his century ("We thus learn that man is descended from a hairy, tailed quadruped, probably arboreal in its habits, and an inhabitant of the Old World"), proceeds to congratulate the human race on its success from such humble origins: "Man may be excused for feeling some pride at having risen, though not through his own exertions, to the very summit of the organic scale. . . ." Or consider several varieties of Christian sanctimony. Balzac certifies *La Comédie Humaine* for infants and Louis Philippe: "Christianity, above all, Catholicism, being . . . a complete system for the repression of the depraved tendencies of man, is the most powerful element of social order. . . . The only possible religion is Christianity. . . . I write under the light of two eternal truths—Religion and Monarchy. . . ." Claudel admonishes Gide for his unbelief: "It is for you, my dear Gide, to realize the stage which you have reached in your life. . . . It is before God that you have to examine yourself in the sincerity of your own conscience." Karl Barth reins us back from mirages of charity: "The God of Mohammed is an idol like all other idols, and it is an optical illusion to characterise Christianity along with Islam as a 'monotheistic' religion." Kierkegaard vindictively plays the metaphysical dandy, God's hypocrite:

> Initiated as I was very early and very thoroughly into the secret that *Mundus vult decipi,* I was not in the position of being able to wish to follow such tactics. Quite the contrary. With me it was a question of deceiving inversely on the greatest possible scale, employing every bit of knowledge I had about men and their weaknesses and their stupidities, not to profit thereby, but to annihilate myself and weaken the impression I made. The secret of the deceit which suits the world which wants to be deceived consists partly in forming a coterie and all that goes with that, in joining one or another of those societies for mutual admiration, whose members support one another with tongue and pen in the pursuit of worldly advantage; and it consists partly in hiding oneself from the human crowd, never being seen, so as to produce a fantastic effect. So I had to do exactly the opposite. I had to exist in absolute isolation and guard my solitude, but at the same time take pains to be seen every hour of the day, living as it were upon the street, in company with Tom, Dick, and Harry, and in the most fortuitous situations. This is truth's way of deceiving, the everlastingly sure way of weakening, in a worldly sense, the impression one makes.

If such an anthology of defunct heroes is necessary, what ought it to accomplish? To begin with, a series of raids on recent cultural archives; as many intelligible quotations as feasible from the central names, documents, controversies of the age and its near ancestry. It is in this way, though, that the editors conceive not part but all of their

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

function, like laying out numberless iron filings on a magnetized board and watching them spring into the shape of a face or a continent. Except that the board is not magnetized and most of the filings rest inert in little heaps (the Preface and the sectional Introductions are mere lecture-hall pomposities and don't help), except that no disturbances are permitted in the corridors, the volume is in this way useful. It is useful to have side by side Cassirer, Malinowski, Jung on myth; Rousseau, Kierkegaard, Dostoevsky on the necessity and impossibility of candor; Blake, Nietzsche, Dostoevsky, Wallace Stevens on the death of God; Flaubert, Gide, Robbe-Grillet on the "pure" novel; Wells and James exchanging blows from uncontiguous universes; all the identifications of art as something—art as art (Wilde, Picasso, Arp, Apollinaire); as religion (Flaubert); as redemption (Blake); as clairvoyance (Rimbaud); as incantation and mystery (Mallarmé); as hallucination (Ernst); as contagious feeling (Tolstoy); as game (Auden); as action (Dubuffet); as instinctual need (Valéry); as machinery (Marinetti); as prophecy (Klee); as supranatural order (Forster); as the registration and focus of a fine consciousness (James); as truth (Yeats); as non-Christian sacrament (Rilke); as sensation (Pater); as proof and record of the untragic separation between man and things (Robbe-Grillet); as social science (Zola, Balzac, Taine, the Goncourts, Dreiser); as living correction of life (Lawrence). Moreover, the editors are not so consistent in their preference for abstraction as to exclude all literature; and, reading in this context "The Legend of the Grand Inquisitor" and *Notes from Underground,* one is pleasantly reminded that great art is always more resourceful, even when it grapples directly with the grand abstractions, than even the best abstract writing about it.

Now and then the equipment generates a flash of lightning between two centuries, and two disciplines usually thought to be unrelated, as when Nietzsche in 1872 reminds us of the philosophic assault on causation—

> Whereas the current optimism had treated the universe as knowable, in the presumption of eternal truths, and space, time, and causality as absolute and universally valid laws, Kant showed how these supposed laws serve only to raise appearance—the work of Maya—to the status of true reality, thereby rendering impossible a genuine understanding of that reality: in the words of Schopenhauer, binding the dreamer even faster in sleep. . . .

and so prepares us for Heisenberg in 1955 on the uncertainty principle:

> . . . if we wish to form a picture of the nature of these elementary particles, we can no longer ignore the physical processes through which we obtain our knowledge of them. While, in observing every-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> day objects, the physical process involved in making the observation plays a subsidiary role only, in the case of the smallest building particles of matter, every process of observation produces a large disturbance. We can no longer speak of the behaviour of the particle independently of the process of observation. As a final consequence, the natural laws formulated mathematically in quantum theory no longer deal with the elementary particles themselves but with our knowledge of them. Nor is it any longer possible to ask whether or not these particles exist in space and time objectively, since the only processes we can refer to as taking place are those which represent the interplay of particles with some other physical system, *e.g.*, a measuring instrument. . . .
>
> We can express the departure from previous forms of physics by means of the so-called uncertainty relations. It was discovered that it was impossible to describe simultaneously both the position and the velocity of an atomic particle with any prescribed degree of accuracy. We can either measure the position very accurately—when the action of the instrument used for the observation obscures our knowledge of the velocity, or we can make accurate measurements of the velocity and forego knowledge of the position. The product of the two uncertainties can never be less than Planck's constant.

Even here, we owe our gratitude not to the editors' perspicacity but to their voluminousness: these two passages are separated by four intervening sections and four hundred pages of text.

On one occasion the editors score a real news beat—nothing less than a retraction of holy writ by the evangelist himself. They print as an appendix to Eliot's 1923 review of *Ulysses,* Eliot's unfavorable judgment, dated January 1964, on that brash young reviewer: "To say that the novel ended with Flaubert and James was possibly an echo of Ezra Pound and is certainly absurd. To say that other writers must follow the procedure of *Ulysses* is equally absurd. . . ."

Eventually, however, the volume becomes less a test of ideas than of personal quality. Strindberg and Zola may start from similar aesthetic premises, but the important fact is that Strindberg is crankily brilliant and Zola as dated as gas lighting. Rousseau may have anticipated Dostoevsky on the problems of candor; but Rousseau is (like Boswell) a fool of genius, whereas Dostoevsky, putting words into the mouth of the underground man, is an extraordinarily intelligent man of genius:

> Every man has reminiscences which he would not tell to every one, but only to his friends. He has other matters in his mind which he would not reveal even to his friends, but only to himself, and that in secret. But there are other things which a man is afraid to tell even to himself, and every decent man has a number of such things stored away in his mind. The more decent he is, the greater the number of such things in his mind. Anyway, I have only lately determined to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

IN REPRINT

An Essential Acquisition For
the Study of American Literature

THE COMPLETE WORKS
OF
EDGAR ALLEN POE

Edited by
JAMES A. HARRISON

"The Virginia Edition"
IN SEVENTEEN VOLUMES
New York • 1902
THE STANDARD EDITION
Reprint Limited to 300 Sets
Available September 15, 1965

●

Pre-Publication Offer
(Effective until August 18, 1965)*
17 Volume Set, (Cloth) $170.00
*(Thereafter $200.00)

AMS PRESS, INC.
56 East 13th Street, New York, N. Y. 10003

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> remember some of my early adventures. Till now I have always avoided them, even with a certain uneasiness. Now, when I am not only recalling them, but have actually decided to write an account of them, I want to try the experiment whether one can, even with oneself, be perfectly open and not take fright at the whole truth. I will observe, in parenthesis, that Heine says that a true autobiography is almost an impossibility, and that man is bound to lie about himself. He considers that Rousseau certainly told lies about himself in his confessions, and even intentionally lied, out of vanity. I am convinced that Heine is right; I quite understand how sometimes one may, out of sheer vanity, attribute regular crimes to oneself, and indeed I can very well conceive that kind of vanity. . . .

George Sand with maternal anxiety advises Flaubert against his "mania" for disappearing from his work, for allowing a novel like *L'Education sentimentale* to be "misunderstood" in default of an instructive preface or internal explication or lovable characters; and, martyred on the rack of his temperament, which prescribes the binding conventions he mistakes for the immutable and newly discovered laws of his art, Flaubert is the great artist and great spirit whose obsession is his salvation:

> Speaking of my friends, you call them my "school." But I am wrecking my health trying *not* to have a school. *A priori,* I reject all schools. Those writers whom I often see and whom you mention admire everything that I despise and worry but little about the things that torment me. Technical detail, factual data, historical truth, and accuracy of portrayal I look upon as very secondary. I aim at *beauty* above all else, whereas my companions give themselves little trouble about it. Where I am devastasted by admiration or horror, they are unmoved; sentences that make me swoon seem very ordinary to them. Goncourt is very happy when he has picked up in the street some word that he can stick into a book; I am very satisfied when I have written a page without assonances or repetitions. I would willingly exchange all Gavarni's captions for a few such marvels as Victor Hugo's *"l'ombre était nuptiale, auguste et solennelle,"* or Montesquieu's *"Les vices d'Alexandre étaient extrêmes comme ses vertus. Il était terrible dans sa colère. Elle le rendait cruel."*

It is a good thing to be confronted with these testimonies, they continue to reverberate into the present; but they don't tell us much beyond themselves. The fatal defect of this volume is that the editors don't have any coherent or particular or vigorous notions about the modern. They assemble their evidence in the hope that once it is all together it will speak with one voice and tell them what the modern is—as if the modern were a fact like Ibsen's influence on Joyce, or an event like Hemingway's meeting with Fitzgerald, or a character like Tom Brangwen, or a movement like Dada, or a phase of style like

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NEW BOOKS from NEW DIRECTIONS

EBERHART **SELECTED POEMS 1930-1965 by Richard Eberhart.** This paperbound volume represents work chosen from all of Richard Eberhart's earlier volumes, from *A Bravery of Earth* (1930) to *The Quarry* (1964), together with some previously unpublished poems. Man and nature, never divisible, are his chief themes, to which he brings a metric subtlety and a power of phrase and image uniquely his own.

ND Paperbook 198, $1.75

KAUFMAN **SOLITUDES CROWDED WITH LONELINESS by Bob Kaufman.** There is deep excitement in the originality and power of Bob Kaufman's poems. The world of jazz, social protest, and the plight of the lonely one fighting the crowd are among the subjects of this young American Negro—but *anything* he chooses to write about comes vividly, almost violently alive in the highly-charged language of this remarkable poet.

ND Paperbook 199, $1.50

MERTON **GANDHI ON NON-VIOLENCE edited, with an introduction, by Thomas Merton.** For this original paperbook, Thomas Merton has selected the basic statements of principle and interpretation which made up Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence. In his long introduction, Father Merton shows how Gandhi linked the thought of East and West in his search for universal truth, relating Gandhi's *Ahimsa* to traditional Hindu *Dharma*, to the Greek and our own concepts of personal freedom, and to the thinking of Thomas Aquinas and later theologians on conscience, good-and-evil, and peace.

ND Paperbook 197, $1.50

MONTALE **SELECTED POEMS of Eugenio Montale.** A bilingual edition edited, with an introduction, by Glauco Cambon; various translators. Although Eugenio Montale has published in his lifetime but three slender volumes of poetry, their quality has been such as to win him acknowledged pre-eminence in Italy today and a world-wide reputation among his peers, the poets of other countries. This first American edition of his work presents selections from each of the three published books, with the original Italian and the English translation *en face*.

Clothbound, $5.00
ND Paperbook 193, $1.75

POUND **A LUME SPENTO and Other Early Poems by Ezra Pound.** *A Lume Spento* was Pound's first book of poems, published in a limited edition of 100 copies in 1908, and long a rare collector's item. His second book, *A Quinzaine for This Yule*, was brought out for Christmas, 1908, and is perhaps even more rare. Both are reprinted here for the first time, along with ten previously unpublished poems also dating from his "Venetian period," and recently re-discovered. *A Lume Spento* includes facsimile pages from the original books and a little-known photograph of Pound taken about 1908.

Clothbound, $5.00

REICHEK **ETCETERA: A Book of Drawings by Jesse Reichek.** In this book, which has no words, only pictures, the San Francisco artist Jesse Reichek achieves a kind of "narrative experience" in purely visual terms, through a sequence of abstract drawings whose forms modulate from one to the next. Saul Bellow has said of Reichek, "He shows us the bonds of matter, tangle and clarity, form on the border of chaos, equilibrium which only just succeeds in maintaining itself."

ND Paperbook 196, $1.60

NEW DIRECTIONS 333 Sixth Ave., New York 10014

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Picasso's Blue Period. The editors throw in something for all tastes: Vico because Joyce was Viconian; stale chestnuts like Arnold on the future of poetry and I. A. Richards on the pseudo-statement; Santayana in his rôle as aesthete of Catholicism (There is no God, and Mary is His mother); Paul Tillich stuffing meaninglessness into meaning, disbelief into piety, hats into rabbits; Proust of course with his soggy madeleine; Malraux on the "museum without walls"; Henry Adams scared to death by the new and American century of profane power—

> Nearly forty years had passed since the ex-private secretary landed at New York with the ex-Ministers Adams and Motley, when they saw American society as a long caravan stretching out towards the plains. As he came up the bay again, November 5, 1904, an older man than either his father or Motley in 1868, he found the approach more striking than ever—wonderful—unlike anything man had ever seen—and like nothing he had ever much cared to see. The outline of the city became frantic in its effort to explain something that defied meaning. Power seemed to have outgrown its servitude and to have asserted its freedom. The cylinder had exploded, and thrown great masses of stone and steam against the sky. The city had the air and movement of hysteria, and the citizens were crying, in every accent of anger and alarm, that the new forces must at any cost be brought under control. Prosperity never before imagined, power never yet wielded by man, speed never reached by anything but a meteor, had made the world irritable, nervous, querulous, unreasonable and afraid. . . . A traveller in the highways of history looked out of the club window on the turmoil of Fifth Avenue, and felt himself in Rome, under Diocletian, witnessing the anarchy, conscious of the compulsion, eager for the solution, but unable to conceive whence the next impulse was to come or how it was to act. The two-thousand-years failure of Christianity roared upward from Broadway, and no Constantine the Great was in sight.

Perhaps Adams was on the right track, the editors might have taken a tip from him: that the modern is America, unbounded centrifugal energy spinning away from the totem of history. Take as epigraph from Donne's Elegy XIX the line, "O my America! my new-found-land," which denotes the naked body of his mistress as he explores it for its own sake and his: no spiritual preparations, no coyness, no fainting spells, no Don-Juanish palaver; pure profane activity in a new world, out of bounds. For an introduction, Lawrence's *Studies in Classic American Literature* (which the editors don't see fit to use in *their* book on the modern) will do very well, and is more entertaining than Vico. Then forget Europe and see how far you can go without stumbling on its ubiquitous relics. Anyhow it's an idea, which is more than Messrs. Ellmann and Feidelson, for all their impressive labors, have come up with.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Burden of Time: The Fugitives and Agrarians

By JOHN L. STEWART. Two literary groups originating in Nashville, Tennessee in the early 1920's had a strong influence on American letters. Known as the "Fugitives" and "Agrarians," they included, among others, John Crowe Ransom, Allen Tate, Robert Penn Warren, Donald Davidson, Merrill Moore. Mr. Stewart concentrates on the ideas, styles, themes of the two groups, and their widespread influence, rather than on biographical data. "—a searching, supple, and most of the time brilliantly precise account of the writing, ideas, and attitudes of several of this century's most interesting men of letters." R. W. B. Lewis.

600 pages. $12.50

The Poetic Art of W. H. Auden

By JOHN G. BLAIR. "Mr. Blair makes fresh use of Auden's critical prose and analyzes Auden's poetry in terms of his intentions and achievements. Mr. Blair organizes his book into discerning topical discussions and considers Auden's chronological development only incidentally. This approach is new in the books on Auden and establishes Auden firmly as a major figure in modern letters."—Frederick P. W. McDowell.

192 pages. $4.50

The Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics

General Editor, ALEX PREMINGER, Associate editors, FRANK J. WARNKE & O. B. HARDISON, Jr. A comprehensive reference work dealing with all aspects of poetry and poetics from history and prosody to types, movements, and critical terminology. Prepared by recognized authorities, its articles possess sufficient depth to be of value to the scholar as well as to the general reader. The entries vary in length from relatively brief notices to articles approaching or exceeding 20,000 words, and are accompanied by generous bibliographies.

930 pages. $25.00

Princeton University Press

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Pulitzer Prize for Poetry

John Berryman

77 DREAM SONGS

Published by
FARRAR, STRAUS & GIROUX
$3.95, now at your bookstore

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED